

Diplomatic blow to Israel mission

Hurd shunned by angry Palestinians

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN JERUSALEM

DOUGLAS Hurd was yesterday shunned by leading Palestinians for allegedly saying he was "absolutely opposed to a Palestinian state" as the solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute. The foreign secretary said he was misquoted.

Twenty-eight Palestinians cancelled a meeting with Mr Hurd and instead held an angry press conference, denouncing British policy.

The rebuff was a further blow to Mr Hurd, who had angered Israeli leaders before he arrived in Jerusalem by condemning the killing of 21 Arabs at the Temple Mount.

The incident yesterday accentuated Western difficulties in the wake of the killings, in spite of Britain's successful efforts to achieve a compromise UN Security Council resolution. Diplomats said that had proved unsatisfactory to both Israel and the Arabs, and there was confusion over Western "linkage" between the Palestinian question and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

The Palestinian leaders yesterday said Britain had altered its stance on the Palestine Liberation Organisation and had engineered a resolution

that lacked "commitment to concrete and effective action to set in motion a genuine political process capable of achieving real peace". The Foreign Office, and Mr Hurd in particular, are regarded by Israel as pro-Arab.

Mr Hurd said last night that British policy had not altered "one jot or tittle". Anyone searching for middle ground was bound to be accused of bias by extremists on either side, he said. Attention must not be distracted from the main priority: the removal of President Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. That could then be followed by progress on the "unfinished business" of the Palestinian question.

Mr Hurd again urged Israel to find a way of accepting the UN secretary-general's mission to investigate the Temple Mount shootings. Israel objects to interference in its sovereignty and will publish its own findings next week.

Hard questions were being asked yesterday about why no one on the foreign secretary's staff or at the British embassy in Tel Aviv had alerted him to the fact that the first item on the Israeli television news on Tuesday evening was a report that Mr Hurd had expressed strong opposition to a future state of Palestine during private meetings with members of the Knesset. British officials did not issue a denial until 11 o'clock yesterday morning, by which time Palestinians had announced their boycott.

The official statement said: "The British position is well-known: it favours self-determination for the Palestinian people. Whether or not that leads to a Palestinian state is a matter for them, and for negotiation. It is very regrettable that leading Palestinians should have taken this incorrect information and used it as a reason for calling off the dogs." The Palestinians were "missing the opportunity to put the views of their people to someone who has consistently stressed the importance of their cause in discussions with the Israeli government."

In a statement of their own, the Palestinian leaders praised Mr Hurd's "courageous and principled stance" in defending Palestinian human rights and self-determination, but accused Britain of backing away from recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. They demanded an upgrading of the diplomatic status of the Palestine mission in London.

Mr Eliahu Ben-Elissar, chairman of the foreign affairs committee, told Israel Radio

that Mr Hurd had said that Britain "did not support the idea of a Palestinian state". Mr Hurd described this as inaccurate, adding: "It is inconceivable that I would use a private meeting at the Knesset to announce a major change in British policy."

In the heated atmosphere after the Temple Mount shootings, the smallest remark is apt to be magnified. Mr Hurd ruefully acknowledged this by saying that he had realised during his short visit to what extent Jerusalem was "a cockpit of tense and conflicting emotions".

The Anglo-Israeli relationship has often been a bruising experience for visiting British ministers. Yesterday's debacle revived memories of the 1988 visit to Gaza by David Mellor, then a Foreign Office minister, when he raised Israeli hackles by upbraiding an army officer.

Mr Hurd said he had refrained from repeating in public criticism of Israel he had voiced before arriving because he thought it better to make the same points to Israeli leaders "quietly, not in a shouting voice" and to listen to the Israeli replies in the same spirit.

He said he did not regard the "shemoozie" at Tel Aviv airport on his arrival, when arrival statements were cancelled at the last moment, as a mark of Israeli displeasure. He hoped that he had been able to put "the other side of the argument" to Israeli leaders in a manner which "may eventually prove persuasive".

Israel and Britain agreed fully that the priority was reversing Iraqi aggression, and Israel deserved praise for "wisely keeping a low profile" in the Gulf crisis. He said the PLO had made a "serious mistake" by supporting Iraq, but a lasting settlement would still require the reconciliation of Israeli and Palestinian nationalisms through Israeli talks with "representative Palestinians".

Arab leaders objected to this, saying it suggested Britain was supporting the Shamir government's concept of a non-PLO alternative leadership in the occupied territories. Mr Hurd said a Middle East settlement must include secure borders for Israel as well as the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

Chastened Hurd, page 10
Daisy, page 14
Leading article, page 15

Shake-up of legal aid to end income trap

By FRANCIS GIBB, LEGAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

PEOPLE who cannot afford to go to law but are too wealthy for legal aid may be made eligible for public funds to pursue their claims under the biggest shake-up of the legal aid scheme since it was set up 40 years ago.

Officials at the Lord Chancellor's Department are studying ways of extending the scope of the legal aid scheme to people who fall within the so-called "middle income trap." For the first time, civil legal aid for some kinds of claim, such as personal injuries, may be made available to everyone, regardless of means,

but subject to paying a contribution towards the costs of the case.

However, it is likely to become harder to obtain aid for divorce, one of the biggest drains on the civil legal aid bill. New, more rigorous tests for granting legal aid in divorce proceedings may be devised: one option would be to oblige couples to go through conciliation procedures by giving "last resort" legal aid only for those disputes that have to be settled by the courts.

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Tougher divorce, page 4

Cammell Laird up for sale

By RONALD FAUX

THE Cammell Laird shipbuilding yard at Birkenhead is to be put up for sale and closed if no buyer can be found, it was announced yesterday by VSEL, its owners. Immediate redundancies among the 2,100 workforce are expected after cutbacks in defence contracts.

The yard has a contract worth £200 million for three SSK submarines for the Royal Navy, which will be completed in 1993. But Noel Davies, VSEL chief executive, said yesterday that the yard, where ships have been made since 1828, no longer had a feasible future in shipbuilding. "It is a sad day, but this offers the best possible prospect for the company and its employees," he said.

Cammell Laird became a subsidiary of VSEL in 1985. The shipyard specialists, based in Barrow-in-Furness, took over from British Shipbuilders immediately before privatisation. The announcement was greeted with sadness but little surprise by unions at the yard.

Parliament, page 9
Political sketch, page 26
Comment, page 29

Thatcher orders new three Rs tests

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND DAVID TYTLER

THE Prime Minister told John MacGregor, the education secretary, last night that changes should be made to the compulsory tests that are to be introduced for all seven-year-olds next May.

Margaret Thatcher is understood to have sought the changes after reading proposals for the reading, writing and arithmetic tests. Final details will be announced within the next few days.

Before the hour-long meeting, government sources had said there was "some difficulty" over the "mechanics" of testing. But when he emerged from 10 Downing Street yesterday, Mr MacGregor indicated that these had been resolved. He said the meeting had been "amicable" and that he would make an announcement after he had put together some final thoughts on advice from the Schools Examinations and Assessment Council.

The meeting had been arranged after Mr MacGregor telephoned Mrs Thatcher at the end of last week's Conservative conference in Bournemouth. He was apparently concerned that she had supported education vouchers without his knowledge and suggested a meeting.

The resultant talks were described as "across the board" and included the vouchers question. They centred, however, on the national curriculum tests, which Mrs Thatcher said should be simple but convincing. The education secretary has already streamlined the examination council's proposals after a

Continued on page 26, col 6

Leading article and Letters, page 15

Auditors say 4m poll tax cases likely

By RAY CLANCY

A DIRECT conflict was brewing last night between the Audit Commission and the environment department over the impact of the community charge. According to a commission report to be published next month, up to four million people face court action for not paying poll tax when the whole system is in danger of degenerating because of huge computer software problems.

The report contradicts the latest government figures. Michael Portillo, the local government minister, said yesterday that, despite a few teething problems, 85 per cent of chargepayers had already made contributions, and the non-payment campaign had failed. He told the Institute of Revenue, Rating and Valuation conference in Scarborough that some councillors had been actively discouraging payments, but all the indications pointed to the majority of the people in Britain liable for community charge now accepting that they had to pay.

The commission paints a picture of council officers nationally battling to keep up with a tight legislative timetable. Yet weaknesses in the system have resulted in local authorities not bothering to collect money from those eligible for rebates because of the cost involved and disincentives to maintain the poll-tax register, according to details from the report, revealed today in the local government

magazine. *Municipal Journal*. However, the commission shows that technology shortfalls are the main problem in England and Wales. The survey of more than 50 councils found that 70 per cent of them had not issued bills by the recommended date at the end of March. 75 per cent did not receive their billing software in time, and 30 per cent have failed to exchange information which could have helped with teething problems.

"Software problems were the major cause of delayed billing... late delivery meant that software could not be adequately tested. The quality of software was as much of a problem as its delivery," the draft report says. One London borough is unable to process changes in its poll-tax register and therefore unable to bill new chargepayers because its software is not yet working.

Researchers also found that, by the beginning of September, halfway through the financial year, six million chargepayers in England, one in six of those eligible to pay, had made no contribution. On previous experience under the rating system, one third pay up after a reminder, the report says, indicating that four to five million summonses are likely to be issued. Another third will probably settle at the summons stage, leaving three to four million liability orders likely to be made.

Student fees, page 7

Union forges new links at GCHQ

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE government is facing growing embarrassment over the in-house staff federation, which replaced traditional civil service unions ejected from Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham.

The GCHQ Staff Federation appears likely to be certified as a fully independent trade union, and it has formed strong links outside GCHQ. At the time of the GCHQ union ban in 1984, the prime minister insisted that the national activities of civil service unions had made a ban necessary.

Concern over the status of the staff federation has become so great that Sir Robin Butler, the cabinet secretary and head of the home civil service, has met GCHQ

management and federation leaders on the issue, within the past month, in an unprecedented visit to the Cheltenham listening station.

Matthew Wake, the government's Certification Officer, refused the staff federation a full certificate of independence, last year, on the grounds that GCHQ's director, in effect, had a veto on the federation's activities.

But the federation is appealing against that decision through the Employment Appeals Tribunal, pointing to a rules change at its conference which now allows it, after a referendum, to affiliate to outside bodies.

Leaders of civil service unions, anxious to return to GCHQ, may now raise the issue with the Cabinet Office and the Treasury.

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Trainer held after doping

Dermot Browne, a Lambourn racehorse trainer, was being questioned last night by South Yorkshire police after the doping of two horses at the Doncaster St Leger meeting last month.

Browne was champion amateur National Hunt jockey in the early 1980s. Police who travelled to Lambourn yesterday said that a man had been arrested. Page 40

Petrol price war

A petrol price war started in earnest last night as Shell cut its four-star by 8.6p a gallon and BP responded by adding 4.5p to a 4.1p cut made earlier in the day. Page 2

Hospital penalty

Money allocated for reducing Britain's 900,000-patient hospital waiting lists will be withdrawn from health authorities failing to reach present targets, the NHS management executive said. Page 3

Nuclear fund

Sir James Goldsmith, the multi-millionaire who stunned the City by giving up his business career to concentrate on environmental issues, is to fund a nationwide campaign against Britain's nuclear industry. Page 4

Lockerbie claim

Two of the 259 passengers on the Pan Am jet blown up over Lockerbie could have survived the 31,000ft fall and might have lived with immediate expert attention, a professor of forensic science said. Page 7

Yeltsin attack

Committees and commissions of the Soviet parliament were silent last night on their response to President Gorbachev's moves to a market economy, but Boris Yeltsin leapt to the attack, apparently seeking a place in the top leadership. Page 13

Power from sea

British mining engineers are working to harvest electricity using the temperature difference between the seas' warm surface and deep polar waters found in tropical and sub-tropical depths 1,000 metres. Science, page 20

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Lady Blatch: finished faster than she began

By PETER MULLIGAN

PROCEEDINGS in the House of Lords came to a halt yesterday after the quickfire delivery of a statement by Lady Blatch, a junior environment minister, disturbed the afternoon calm and confounded many peers. The normally sedate upper chamber adjourned for 25 minutes following complaints that its members had been put in a "totally impossible position". Observers of procedure believe that a similar adjournment has taken place only once or twice in the last 10 years.

Peers protested that they could not assess her speech without a written copy in

front of them while Lord Shackleton, son of the famous explorer, asked if she could read it more slowly.

Television monitors around the building bore the words "adjourned during pleasure" - normally a reference to a meal break - but it was apparent that pleasure was not much involved. The subject of her statement was the cost and staffing level of the reorganisation of the Nature Conservancy Council which is to be split up into separate agencies.

Lady Blatch, aged 53, appointed earlier this year, began by telling the House that she wished to bring it up to date on events that had occurred over the summer.

She then set out on a brisk reading of the script in front of her. Copies which later reached the press box showed it to be six pages of closely-typed script.

She had reached a little over half way and was responding to concern about the reorganisation expressed in a letter to *The Times* by Sir William Wilkinson, chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council, when the interruption began.

Peers were stung to protest at her declaration that three consultants' reports about the reorganisation - which they might have used in the debate - had been put in their library last week. Lord McIntosh of Har-

gey, from the Labour front bench, commented on the complexity of her speech. While she had been personally extremely courteous, he said, it was "physically impossible" to react to her words in the absence of a copy of her text.

Lady Blatch resumed her statement, missing out half a paragraph, and hurried on to the end, appearing to some to conclude faster than she began.

Lord Shackleton, who speaks from the Labour benches, supported the demand by his front bench for an adjournment. Lord Denham, the leader of House, immediately acquiesced.

Further rise in unemployment expected as firms feel pinch

By Staff Reporters

TODAY'S unemployment figures are expected to show another increase. Economic forecasters expect the present unemployment total of 1.654 million to rise by about another 25,000, giving the fifth straight month of increases since the figure started to rise in April.

Growing unemployment is an inevitable effect of the squeeze on demand of the government policy of high interest rates. It is also hurting, however, as companies, local job offices and unions throughout the country are showing.

Economic growth in the late Eighties has been strongest in the South-East. Employment has risen sharply there in manufacturing and services. It is also the region in which some effects of the squeeze are being felt the hardest.

The Thames Valley, strung out along the M4 corridor, and encompassing towns such as Bracknell, Slough, New-

bury and Swindon, has been among the best economic performers. Now, however, unemployment is steadily rising.

According to local economic surveys, output in the area is down for the first time in three years. Labour shortages have eased, and clerical and skilled manual jobs, previously vacant, can now be filled. Unemployment is up from 2.1 per cent to about 2.4 per cent in the last quarter and, although the rise is small, it is significant that it is happening at all in an area like the South-East.

Over in the Medway area, unemployment, at about 4 per cent, is higher, but it is rising at about the same pace. In areas such as Thanet, which traditionally have higher unemployment, the jobless total is already up to 7.7 per cent and rising.

North of London, in Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes, the position is more complicated. Many companies still have staff shortages and are having to pay high wages to try to ease them. But redundancies have also been rising and many

companies are trying to increase cost efficiency by cutting staff.

In Norwich, unemployment is also rising. During the next quarter, 21 per cent of manufacturing companies expect to reduce their workforces, up from an expectation of 11 per cent. There are, however, still shortages of skilled manual workers.

In the service sector, the position is worse, although employment service managers believe that a number of proposed schemes will increase jobs, such as 600 from a £125 million new office and retail development.

Employers in the North-West admit to "difficult times", but avoid describing the downturn as a recession. Perhaps the most potent symbol of unemployment pressure in the region is the appearance on Liverpool city council's agenda of redundancy schemes for its workforce to help to avoid a £19 million deficit.

The North West TUC described the

overall unemployment position in the region as "dreadful and deteriorating", with lay-offs and closures across the board, from breweries, engineering companies, the chemical industry and firms relying on defence-related contracts. "It is nearly as bad as the position in the mid-Eighties," a TUC official said.

About the only growth was in tourism. Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Industry reported that trading opportunities in the immediate future look less promising. The chamber's latest survey, covering 522 firms employing 100,000, showed that in the past three months, half had maintained workforce at the same level, 27 per cent had expanded and 21 per cent had contracted.

In the Midlands, the number of people unemployed in Coventry and Birmingham, where there is an emphasis on engineering, rose by 245 and 1,294 respectively between July and August. In Coventry, 6.3 per cent of the workforce

was jobless and the figure in Birmingham rose to 7.3 per cent. The new statistics are expected to show another rise.

Tony Bradley, of Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce, said: "Home and export orders are both down. It is not good, but it is not a disaster. Recession is not a word I like to use, but in jobs and falling orders, the signs are there that it is becoming increasingly difficult. There will be some casualties."

A survey of manufacturing prospects for the region showed the number of companies reporting that export orders were down rose from 23 per cent in June to 35 per cent last month. There were similar figures for the home market.

In Wales, government programmes have helped, but in Aberdare, in south Wales, the closure of old coal plants and mines is pushing men on to the job market. Adult male unemployment is now about 18 per cent. Some light electronics companies, which were supposed to supply replacement jobs, are

now also losing staff.

The slowdown in the economy appears to be less marked in Scotland than in the United Kingdom as a whole. Unemployment has remained at slightly over 200,000 since spring. The May figure showed the biggest drop since the autumn of 1980 and increases during the following three months were small.

In Northern Ireland, the economy will be insulated to some extent by public sector expenditure that accounts for about two-thirds of gross domestic product in the province and by the huge annual subsidy paid from the government. However, Dr Graham Gudgin, director of the independent Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre, estimates that over the next year the unemployment rate will rise from 13.5 per cent to just over 14 per cent. This still makes Northern Ireland by far the worst UK region in terms of unemployment, despite the fall in the past three years from about 18 per cent.

Labour in attack on training cuts

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Labour party said yesterday that a leaked government document clearly indicated the damage being done to the employment department's training programme by cuts in funding.

The attack came as it became clear at Westminster that Michael Howard, the employment secretary, had settled his department's funding for training in talks with Norman Lamont, chief secretary to the Treasury, avoiding the star chamber process of settling this year's public spending round.

An internal employment department document from the London operational office of the Training Agency said there were already "sizeable waiting lists" for places on the Youth Training Scheme, and that "the reduction in funds has resulted in some employers being reluctant to take on special needs trainees".

It said that some work placement shortages were being reported and that further budget cuts would mean the loss of more training providers.

Although it was too early to say whether the quality of government training had been affected by budget cuts, training providers were cutting corners in the training offered.

The document, a memo to Ian Randall, who is responsible for further education in the Training Agency, is a local one, but Labour said that it painted a general picture.

Tony Blair, shadow employment secretary, said: "This memo confirms all we have claimed about the devastating damage done to training by the cuts already implemented and the absolute necessity of preventing any further cuts next year."

The employment department confirmed that the document was genuine, but said that the government was totally committed to its guarantee of a training place for every 16 to 18-year-old school leaver who could not find a job, and for other priority groups.

The department would not disclose how much extra Mr Howard had obtained, but said it was convinced there would be resources for future training.

● Action Trust, part of the Campaign for Work pressure group, releases evidence today of training underfunding, and says that the employment department needs an extra £250 million this year to fund training properly.

Calls for pay rises above inflation are 'destructive'

By Tim Jones, EMPLOYMENT CORRESPONDENT

UNION leaders calling for above inflation pay rises were described yesterday as "reckless and destructive" and were told that 230,000 jobs could be lost for every pay rise of 1 per cent more than prices.

Michael Howard, employment secretary, delivering one of the government's strongest attacks yet on the wave of high pay claims, also blamed employers for not resisting large wage demands. His warning was dismissed, however, by union leaders who said their members could not be expected to suffer the consequences of government mismanagement of the economy.

Norman Willis, general secretary of the TUC, said: "Michael Howard may talk of reckless union leaders, yet it is the government's mishandling of the economy which has given us double digit inflation and rising unemployment. For them now to appeal for wage restraint is buck-passing on a massive scale. It is not a policy, it is panic."

Mr Howard, speaking in London, was reflecting growing government concern over high wage claims and settlements and their effect on unemployment, which official figures to be published today will show has risen for the sixth month in succession. He said that what could be a "golden decade" for Britain was in danger of being jeopardised by calls for pay increases that considerably outpaced inflation.

"At this crucial time, such talk could scarcely be more reckless and destructive. The hard fact is that too many unions are more concerned about money than jobs," he said. "They prefer to fight for increases for employed workers now, rather than look to the future. They are far too often prepared to put jobs at risk."

Some employers were equally short-sighted. "They sometimes prefer to concede large pay settlements which should be resisted," he said.

He said that too many unions and employers still worshipped at the false shrine of the "going rate", a settlement level that had been reached by some and which was taken as a purely arbitrary

goal. "This phenomenon tends to ratchet up both the initial demands of unions and the figure at which employees are willing to settle. It takes no account whatsoever of the trading or competitive position of the firm in which they work, or, worse still, of what that firm might have to do in order to meet the claim."

Gavin Laird, general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, said that unions would not take responsibility for a government economic policy which was in tatters. "We have just negotiated a 16.6 per cent rise for 1,600 of our workers. We would not have done that if a single job was at risk."

John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB general union, said the minister had rejected a suggestion for a co-ordinated wage policy, designed to avoid leap-frogging claims, to be worked out as part of a national agenda. "We challenge him to come to the next meeting of the National Economic Development Council to put forward his plans."

Mr Howard outlined the initiatives being taken by the government to improve skills training and said there was no point in creating and sustaining a Rolls-Royce training framework if, at the end, there were no jobs for trainees.

● The North-South divide will widen as the government's efforts to stem inflation bite, with unemployment rising in the North, according to a report published today.

The report, by the Employment Institute, says that the long-term economic prospects for the nation will suffer if steps are not taken immediately to bridge the North-South divide. David Blackaby and Neil Manning of University College, Swansea, the authors of the report, recommend more funds for Training and Enterprise Councils in the North, improvements in regional infrastructure and greater efforts to reduce regional concentrations of long-term unemployment. "Britain needs to enter the Single European Market as a competitive economy as a divided two-tier British economy is unlikely to thrive after 1992."



An apple a day: John Gummer, the agriculture minister, at the launch yesterday of the main English apple and pear season, where he urged growers to take advantage of the 35 per cent government grants available for the next three years for the replanting of orchards.

Paying for poor car security

THOUSANDS of motorists could be forced to pay for their car's poor security record through higher insurance premiums (Kevin Eason writes). The Association of British Insurers has produced plans to double the number of insurance group ratings currently used for vehicles to penalise those cars with a bad record of thefts and break-ins.

Cars with high quality locks or alarm systems will be rated into lower insurance groups. But drivers with cars that have proved easy to break into will be rated higher, costing their owners more in annual payments.

The move comes as the industry faces record losses from car crime. Figures dis-

closed to *The Times* yesterday show that insurance industry payments for losses on car crime are up by 23 per cent so far this year and will probably cost as much as £400 million by the end of the year.

Tony Baker, the association's general insurance manager, said that the decision to extend the number of vehicle insurance groups from nine to 18 was to help focus attention on the cars which have a bad security record. The groupings are expected to reflect a league table of cars most vulnerable to crime being drawn up by the Home Office and the Department of Transport for David Waddington, the Home Secretary.

Mr Waddington is threaten-

ing to publish his table in April because manufacturers have done little to promote vehicle security while a big effort has gone into improving speed and performance.

The association has passed on its concern over the rapid increase of car thefts and break-ins, which now account for a quarter of all recorded crime, to Mr Waddington at the Home Office standing conference on crime prevention. Mr Baker said: "Theft is only one element, but when that is rising by 23 per cent a year then the alarm bells start ringing. The latest crime figures are extremely worrying and this move is part of the effort to get to grips with what is going on."

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Mackay supports tougher divorce laws for children's sake

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

LORD Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, has signalled his support for more rigorous divorce laws to make it harder for couples to separate without considering the needs of their children.

Instead of the present system of "quick and easy" divorce, there should be a more considered process in which couples have time to think about the children and future, he said. At the moment, the parents of 150,000 children a year split up.

In a speech to the annual general meeting of the National Family Conciliation Council in London, Lord

Mackay also criticised divorce as a "knee-jerk reaction to a problem", with no procedure built into the process to promote understanding or agreement. Instead, divorce laws encouraged couples to take up entrenched positions and to prepare to do battle. His speech comes just weeks before the Law Commission's final proposals on divorce reform.

Lord Mackay made it clear that he favours one of the commission's main proposals, which is that divorce should be a process carried out "over time", rather than the other principal proposal, which is

for a one-year period of separation. Conciliation, in which couples would have the chance to consider the future of the children and make arrangements in a non-hostile atmosphere, would play an important role in such new procedures.

"What we want for the future is a process that does not allow divorce to be easy, but makes it more rigorous by encouraging people to face the consequences and make arrangements for the future before they get divorced," Lord Mackay expressed concern that, under present trends, almost 40 per cent of marriages would end in divorce and one in four children under 16 would be affected by the experience.

He attacked present procedures, which he said might contribute to the difficulty in reaching agreement on the arrangements for children and other matters, and questioned the role of fault, or misbehaviour, in divorce. That encouraged couples to look to the past, instead of to the future.

At present, Lord Mackay said, apportioning blame and giving it a label, such as adultery or unreasonable behaviour might obstruct agreement or reconciliation. A decision by one partner to end a marriage should not plunge the family into war, in which the initiator received a hasty decree terminating the marriage. "Everyone becomes a loser in the subsequent battle."

"We need to find a way which does not make divorce appear the instant, the only solution, only to find that it leaves much heartache and dispute in its wake. What we want for the future is a process that does not allow divorce to be easy, but makes it more rigorous by encouraging people to face the consequences and make arrangements for the future before they get divorced," he said.

"Such a process might also improve the chances of saving a marriage if by looking at these consequences and considering the future of the children, some people draw back from the decision to divorce." The Lord Chancellor said if a procedure allowed for counselling, conciliation and mediation in an environment free from pressure, it might promote more opportunities for couples to agree, he said. "Agreements are good for children."

Move to restrict use of jail terms

By OUR LEGAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

CROWN court judges will be required to state their reasons for jailing offenders guilty of some of the most serious crimes under a significant change to be made in the forthcoming criminal justice bill.

The change will reduce the number of prison sentences in favour of community-based penalties, even for those who have committed offences as serious as robbery.

Under the bill, expected this autumn, judges and magistrates will be required to comply with new, statutory criteria that will restrict the circumstances in which they can impose jail sentences. They will only be able to jail an offender when it is necessary to protect the public from serious harm.

The original aim, as outlined in the Home Office white paper *Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public*, was that these criteria should apply to offences triable by magistrates only, and to those triable either by magistrates or the crown court. The most serious offences, which are triable only by indictment in the crown court, such as murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and certain cases of burglary were specifically excluded.

It is now understood that after representations from bodies such as the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO), officials have agreed to extend the criteria to a range of indictable-only offences, such as robbery. The criteria will apply where the offender is under 21, which was already intended, and also where the offender is an adult who has not previously served a prison sentence.

Paul Cavatone, an official with NACRO, welcomed the decision yesterday but said that the case for applying the new criteria to all custodial sentences remained strong. At present only about one in four offenders in England and Wales convicted of indictable-only offences receives a non-custodial sentence. In 1988, the total was 2,752 out of a total sentenced of 10,464.

Under the change now agreed, the figure could rise substantially. Information packs are to be issued to every prisoner on entering jail to help to reduce the sometimes dangerous anxieties that can afflict inmates (Quentin Cowdry writes). From next summer, briefing packs containing information ranging from prisoners' rights and privileges to visiting hours will be handed to every new inmate.

The Home Office already produces prisoner information booklets, but these are poorly circulated and do not enjoy much credibility with prisoners. Officials hope that the new packs, written jointly by the Home Office and the Prison Reform Trust, will be more successful.



For his eyes only: Sir James Goldsmith's home on his estate in Jalisco, Mexico, said to resemble a lair of a typical James Bond movie villain

Goldsmith funds anti-nuclear campaign

By JAMIE DETTMER and PETER VICTOR

SIR James Goldsmith, the multi-millionaire entrepreneur who yesterday stunned the City by announcing that he was giving up his business career to concentrate on environmental issues, has agreed to fund a nationwide campaign against the nuclear industry in Britain.

The thrust of the campaign, which will be run by the *Ecologist* magazine and pressure group, is to persuade politicians and the public that nuclear power is not an acceptable way of overcoming the greenhouse effect. Sir James, aged 57, has already given the magazine, which he

helped set up in 1969, £50,000 towards the initial costs of the campaign.

According to Edward Goldsmith, his brother and a co-editor of the *Ecologist*, Sir James is also concerned about the use of chemical pesticides in farming and the destruction of the rain forests. "He is not going to waste his time on the small issues," he said.

Sir James's decision to call a halt to his career as a buccannery corporate raider only a year after he was at the forefront of a £13.5 billion takeover bid for BAT, the tobacco, retail and insurance group, surprised many business associates, who have

questioned whether he will stay away from the boardroom battles he has revelled in for 30 years. Those closer to him, however, say his commitment to ecology is genuine and that his decision to switch wholeheartedly to green issues merely confirms a long standing passion. Tim Bell, a press relations expert and friend of Sir James, said: "It is not a new decision really. He has been moving that way for a long time."

A confidant of the entrepreneur said that Sir James had virtually withdrawn from active business management

shortly before the October 1987 stock market crash. Sir James sold several businesses and a substantial amount of shares a few weeks before Black Monday, and only returned to the world of finance to take part last year in the takeover bid for BAT. "He was tempted into the BAT bid by Jacob Rothschild, who persuaded him that it would be an historic deal if it came off. It was an aberration for Sir James who has now a deep vein of pessimism about the financial world."

Adam Faith, the entrepreneur and former singer and actor, who has been

campaigning to save the black rhino in Tanzania, welcomed Mr Goldsmith's commitment to the environment. "If he brings to environmental work the kind of energy, dynamism and ability that he brought to his business dealings, then he could make a difference. His money will be less important than Sir James Goldsmith himself. The fact that a man of his calibre is working on green issues will make a tremendous impact."

Sir James has contributed to environmental causes for many years. The running of his 16,000-acre Mexican estate on the Gulf of California has also been marked by his interest in ecology. Rare and endangered animals have been collected there and the land is farmed organically. Few outsiders have managed to penetrate the estate, said to resemble the lair of a typical James Bond millionaire-villain, with electronic and human security arrangements.

Don't all rush, page 14

Patients died after drink of dish fluid

A health authority was yesterday fined £1,000 for breaching safety laws when two patients died after being given dish-washing fluid to drink.

Joseph Firth, aged 81, and Leslie Wharmby, aged 74, patients at the High Royds mental hospital, Menston, near Leeds, suffered terrible burns to the mouth and throat after a nurse mistook a jug of dish-washing fluid for lemon juice. Magistrates were told the cleaner using the fluid had received no training about it. Leeds Western Health Authority admitted inadequate training and was found guilty of failing promptly to tell the Health and Safety Executive of the accident.

Arson charge is dropped

A woman accused of arson at her former boy friend's home has had the charge dropped. It was announced yesterday. Jane Salvesson, aged 36, of West Kensington, London, had been charged after a fire at the Fulham home of Michael Stevens. The Crown Prosecution Service said that there was insufficient evidence.

Last year, Miss Salvesson had a murder charge withdrawn after Mr Stevens's fiancée, Diana Maw, was shot in the head with a crossbow bolt.

Busman's award

Derek Maynard, of Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, who has had a phobia of buses since receiving serious back injuries in 1986 when a bus he was cleaning at a depot was hit by another was yesterday awarded damages of £89,959 against London Buses.

Abduction case

Steven Burns, aged 20, a waiter in Newquay, Devon, was yesterday charged with abducting Matthew Davy, aged six, in the town. Matthew, from Newquay, disappeared more than two weeks ago, and was found by chance on Tuesday by a relative in Kent.

Unlucky trip

A rare grey-checked thrush survived a freak flight across the Atlantic only to die at the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust's bird sanctuary at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, when it flew into a glass door.

Flood bleeper

A bleeper service has begun for Wye Valley farmers after complaints of insufficient warning of floods. The National Rivers Authority will bleep farmers if they should move stock to higher ground.

Deaf-blind people given fresh hope

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

PEOPLE without sight and hearing might soon be able to converse with friends hundreds of miles away, read a daily newspaper, keep in touch with events on television and retire in the evening with a Booker prize bestseller.

British electronics engineers yesterday unveiled a remarkable telecommunications system for deaf and blind people which allows communication with the outside world. Experts believe that the system, called Hand-Tapper, could

make such people more independent and improve their quality of life.

The prototype, which researchers say could be a commercial reality in a year, given suitable funding, has been developed by a team at University College London in conjunction with deaf-blind people and the National Deaf-Blind League, a charity.

More than 11,000 Britons are crippled by the dual handicap of deafness and blindness. An estimated 90 per cent cannot master Braille. The primary method of communication for such people is finger-spelling, based on the British manual finger-spelling alphabet, in which parts of the hand and the way in which these areas are touched or stroked relates to a specific letter.

Hand-Tapper harnesses the alphabet to allow a person unskilled in finger-spelling to communicate with a deaf-blind person via a telephone. At the heart of the system is a hand shaped pad carrying vibrating pins corresponding to the alphabet and a modem linked to the telephone. Someone dialing Hand-Tapper types the conversation on to a keyboard, or dictates the conversation to one of British Telecom's special operators, who then relays the text down the telephone.

The communication causes the pins to pop up and vibrate singly or in sequence depending on the letter and using his or her own keyboard the handicapped person can respond. Field trials will start soon and the charity is to launch a fund-raising appeal.

'Cynical' cigarette sales attacked

By THOMSON PRENTICE, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

SHOPKEEPERS who sell single cigarettes to children are acting as cynical drug pushers, researchers said yesterday.

A survey of 3,513 teenagers at nine schools in Bristol found that most of those who smoked had bought single cigarettes. The more a teenager smoked, the more likely he or she was to have bought cigarettes one at a time.

Martin Jarvis, of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's health behaviour unit, said that children under 16 were spending a total of £70 million a year on cigarettes, although it was against the law to sell to them.

"Our results imply a cynical flouting of the law by many shopkeepers who are acting straightforwardly as drug pushers," he said. "Nicotine is a very powerful addictive drug and other studies have shown that people abusing heroin, cocaine and alcohol have found cigarettes hardest to give up."

Mr Jarvis carried out the survey with Ann McNeill, formerly of the Institute of Psychiatry's addiction research unit, and now with the Health Education Authority. Dr McNeill said: "About 110,000 people a year in Britain die from smoking-related diseases and the tobacco industry needs to recruit 300 new smokers a day to replace them. About 24 per cent of boys aged 15 and about 31 per cent of girls of the same age are known to smoke, and there is good evidence that they quickly become hooked."

"Given the intractability of the smoking habit, anything which makes cigarettes more

available to those with little money to spend can only encourage recruitment of another generation of cigarette addicts."

The results of the survey are published in this month's issue of the *British Journal of Addiction* and were presented at a news conference held by the British Medical Association in London. The association said that in 1988 only 29 shopkeepers were prosecuted for selling cigarettes to children under 16, and 26 of those were convicted.

According to a government-funded study in the same year, only 8 per cent of children were refused cigarettes when they tried to buy them.

The Parents Against Tobacco organisation, which is supported by the association and by the Health Education Authority, said it would try to find a sponsor for a private member's bill which would seek tougher penalties for shopkeepers who made illegal sales.

A steep rise in claims for alleged malpractice involving accidents at birth in maternity wards could lead to cutbacks in hospital services, solicitors said yesterday.

The number of such claims has more than doubled in the last year to almost 40, according to a study by Capsticks, a law firm specialising in the health service.

Brian Capstick, co-author of the study, said at a conference in London yesterday that there was no evidence of declining medical standards. The main cause for the increase was a change in legal aid rules in April last year.

Lack of support upset bishop

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS REPORTER

THE Bishop of Durham described yesterday his anger at the churchmen and theologians who failed to stand by him when his controversial views on central Christian beliefs led to calls for his dismissal and resignation.

The Rt Rev David Jenkins said that the controversy that surrounded his views on the virgin birth and the resurrection had been extremely stressful. "What really made me angry was that lots of people in the Church who must have known that what I was saying was accepted teaching in theological colleges simply did not enter into the controversy or give me support. There was a sense of feeling let down."

The bishop, a former professor of theology at Leeds university, was speaking at the launch of *Lying Down in Church*, a book about one church's approach to relaxation and meditation. The author, the Rev Geoffrey Harding, retired vicar of St Mary Woolnoth in the city, is a lifelong friend of the bishop.

Dr Jenkins said: "It was not until I came to terms with how angry I was that I was able to deal with the stress. This

notion that we are heroes and can cope with anything without it doing us any harm is a very dangerous one."

Dr Jenkins, aged 65, caused a furor when he said on a television religious programme that Christ's resurrection had been spiritual rather than physical. He said that he had been angry that his statement of what had been obvious for years had caused such a fuss and such frequent misrepresentation.

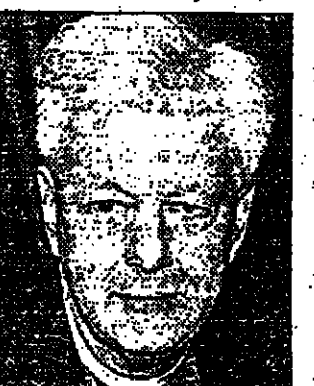
Referring to demands that he should withdraw as bishop-elect before his consecration at York Minster in July 1984, he

said: "There would be no question of my consecration being stopped because anyone who knew anything about theology, who actually investigated it, couldn't possibly find any reason for not consecrating me. I gather now that lots of people thought it could be stopped or would be stopped but that never entered my head."

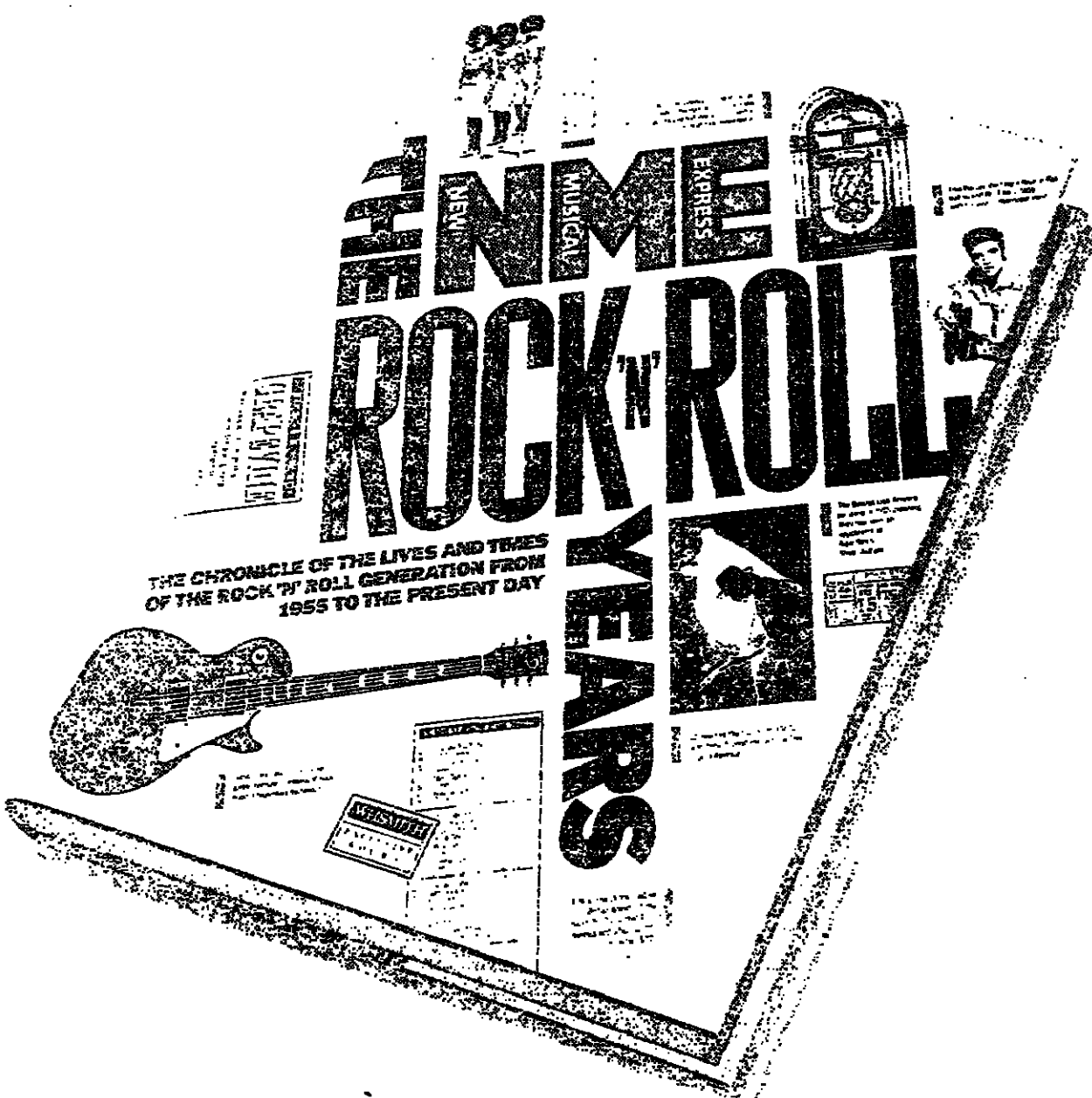
Dr Jenkins added: "I got hundreds and it later grew into thousands of letters. The majority supporting me. The important point is that the discussion has got going. I don't really have any regrets now."

His personal relaxation technique involves withdrawing into himself and being still, "even in a space in a service". Dr Jenkins said. "Of course it is a stressful job being a bishop, but stress is handled properly is surely part of it. It keeps you on your toes. Being relaxed is not being a puddle. It's withdrawing into yourself in order to get out there again."

Lying Down in Church, Churchman Publishing (117 Broomfield Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex, £4.95)

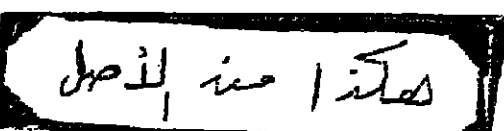


Jenkins: "I don't really have any regrets now"



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Instant help 'might have saved two Lockerbie victims'

TWO passengers from Pan Am 103 might have survived the 31,000ft fall to the ground after a terrorist bomb exploded on the aircraft over Lockerbie, an enquiry was told yesterday.

Anthony Busuttil, professor of forensic medicine at Edinburgh university, told the hearing in Dumfries that they might have survived had they received immediate medical treatment. He said that the passengers would have hit the ground at about 120mph after falling for some two-and-a-half minutes.

Professor Busuttil said that a team of eight pathologists grouped the 259 victims from the aircraft into three categories: those with gross injuries who would have been killed outright; those still suffering extensive damage to vital organs, who might have been killed outright or who died soon after losing consciousness; and the two passengers with less severe injuries.

"It is possible that this

group may have survived for a short time," he said. The professor also told the enquiry that the 11 Lockerbie residents killed would have died instantly when the aircraft's fuel-laden wing section crashed on the Sherwood area of the town, creating a fireball. The three-man crew on the flight deck would have been killed outright, as would 11 of the 13 cabin crew.

There was no evidence that the bomb, in a baggage container on the New York-bound Boeing 747, created a fire in the aircraft.

Professor Busuttil condemned as disgraceful an article by William Eckert, an American pathologist, in the *American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology*, and said it had wrongly claimed that the body of a victim was found clutching a child. The article also contained factual inaccuracies, including the wrong date for the crash and an incorrect casualty toll. He said that Dr Eckert was editor of the journal.

The professor, the first

pathologist to give evidence at the enquiry, said that the eight pathologists were called to Lockerbie after the disaster, working at first in a makeshift mortuary in the town hall. The mortuary was later moved to the town's ice rink.

The bodies of seven of the 11 Lockerbie people who died were never found, he said. The explosion caused by the crash would have destroyed their bodies. Those which had been found showed severe burns and multiple injuries from debris falling on or near them. The enquiry was told earlier that the names of the two passengers who might have survived "for a short time" were being withheld in line with relatives' wishes.

Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, the Lord Advocate, asked the professor: "Let us take an extreme example: if, by the greatest of good fortune, one of those within group three had been immediately attended upon by the best-qualified medical team imaginable, would long-term survival have been possible?"

The professor replied:

"There is a possibility that, if resuscitation was available immediately, with access to hospital facilities, these could have been 'survived'."

The Lord Advocate asked: "For those two?" Professor Busuttil replied: "For those two."

The enquiry was told last week that a Lockerbie woman was convinced that she had felt a pulse on the body of a woman found near the cockpit section at Tundergarth. Other witnesses said that woman may have been Noelle Berri, aged 40, from Paris, a stewardess. Professor Busuttil told the enquiry, however, that she had suffered injuries "totally incompatible" with surviving.

He said 201 of the plane's 243 passengers would have been killed outright without question. Nineteen could have died outright or soon after falling unconscious. The two less severely injured could have survived "for a short time" — but this was no more than a possibility.

Professor Busuttil told the hearing that victims in free fall from a disintegration at that height would have hit the ground at a speed of 120mph. Ground injuries would have masked any suffering in the aircraft, but no passenger showed evidence of burns or smoke inhalation.

"Some victims may have fallen faster because they were attached to heavy parts of the aircraft. Some may have fallen more slowly because they were with parts of the aircraft which fluttered down," he said.

Some passengers might have regained consciousness as they fell into lower altitudes with more oxygen, remaining conscious in free fall all the way to the ground. It was not possible, however, to say which individuals were conscious.

Boom in bicycles puts new pressure on safety

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

IN THE decade since Norman Tebbit advised the unemployed to get on their bikes the ozone-friendly bicycle has assumed unimagined importance as a means of transport.

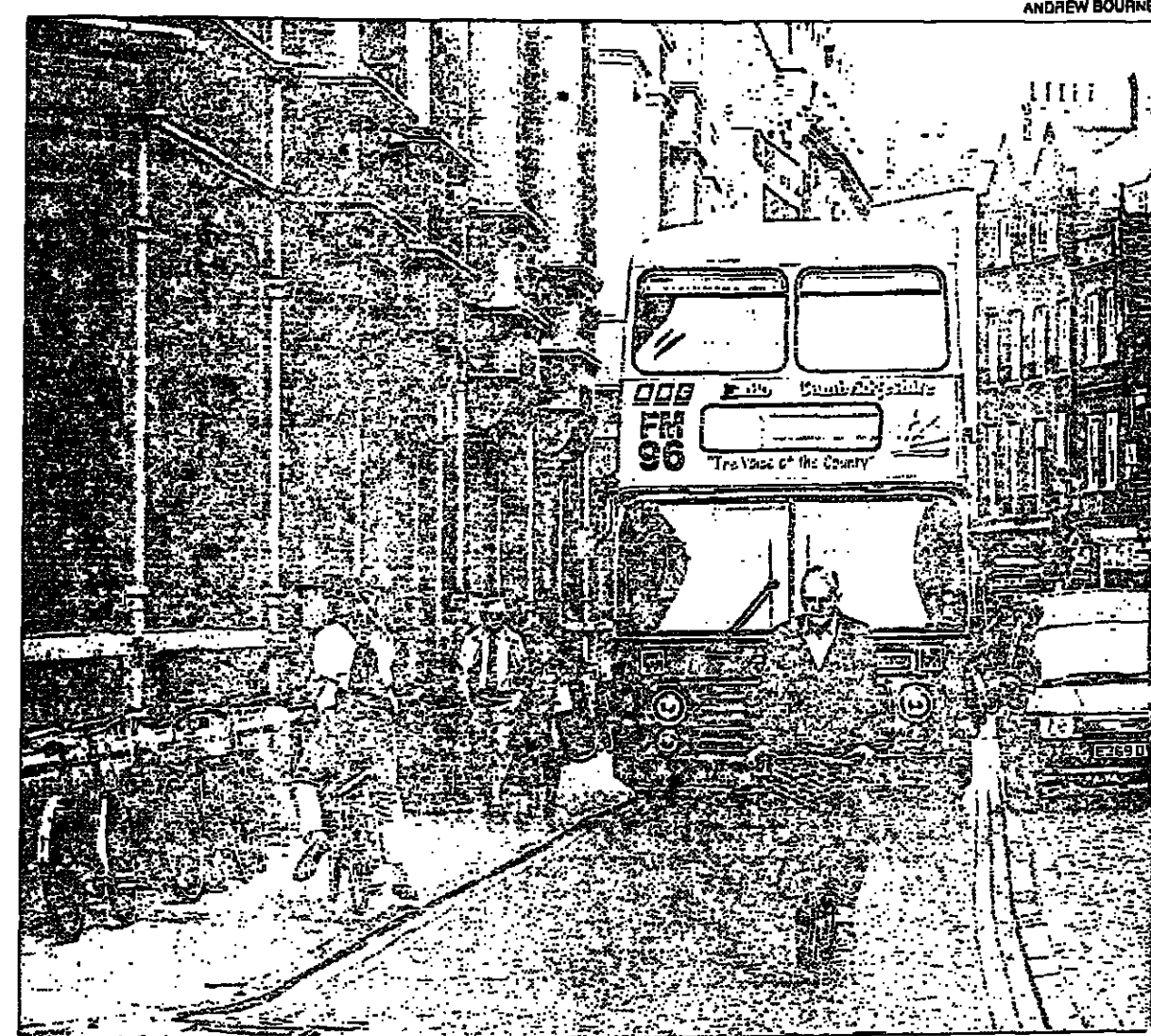
Sales have almost doubled from 1.5 million to 2.8 million a year and there are now an estimated 13 million bicycle owners in Britain, more than three-and-a-half million of whom regularly use pedal power to get to work.

The boom in cycling has inevitably meant a higher casualty toll on the roads, now rising by 10 per cent a year. In 1989, 20,716 adults and 7,797 children were injured, of whom 232 adults and 62 children died. The result is a growing clamour for bicycle lanes and other safety improvements, greater awareness by motorists of the cyclist and a co-ordinated government transport policy.

The Department of Transport announced yesterday that a road safety initiative for children will be launched in the spring, by which time the London Cycling Campaign also hopes that a 1,000-mile network of bicycle routes in the capital will have been agreed by the London boroughs.

A nationwide survey of cyclists published today by Gallup shows that 58 per cent of cyclists feel local authorities are not doing enough to provide safe routes and they want the plans for London copied by other cities. Nearly three out of ten cyclists have been involved in some kind of accident.

The survey, for the bicycle



Uneasy rider: this cyclist battling with rush-hour traffic in Cambridge could soon be forced off the city's streets as the local authority tonight discusses banning cycles from a section of the centre between 10am and 4pm. Students have protested at the move, which the council says is also being made to tackle an increase in accidents.

and accessories retailer Halfords, also shows that although 93 per cent want an integrated transport policy similar to that on the Continent, 37 per cent would be willing to pay a bicycle tax to fund more facilities on the road such as new routes.

Len Unwin, general secretary of the British Cycling Federation, said: "It's an increasingly popular mode of transport. Just look in any town and you will find more and more people using bikes to commute to work. It's environmentally desirable but also the most economic form of transport. The major problem we face, though, is that when road schemes

are being considered no thought is given to the cyclist. There are clearly not enough cycle routes through towns but things are beginning to improve and there is now support for us from the Department of Transport."

Indications of growing pedal power during the nineties are emerging regularly as a counter to the increasing costs of energy and congestion.

Workers at the Body Shop store chain have set a trend by introducing company bicycles as a perk, the local authorities of Camden and Haringey, north London, operate "bike pools" for staff to use on council

business, and Sutton council, south London, pays the same mileage rate to cyclists on council business as motorists.

Halfords is working with British Rail to provide increased bicycle parking facilities and a number of pilot stations throughout the Network SouthEast catchment area have been chosen to encourage commuters to cycle rather than drive to their local stations.

Mintel, the market research company, forecasts that bike sales will increase by two-thirds in the next five years as local authorities make greater provision for cyclists. Britain, never-

theless, still has a long way to catch up with its European neighbours, especially The Netherlands where up to 40 per cent of people commute by bicycle.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents renewed a call yesterday for cyclists to wear reflective clothing and for motorists to be more bike-conscious.

A spokesman for the transport department said: "Judging by the buoyancy in cycle sales, cycling is getting more and more popular but it is one of the least safe modes of transport. We aim to make it safer. There will be a big campaign in the spring."

Student fees to be arrested over poll tax debts

By KERRY GILL

SHERIFF officers have been ordered to arrest university and college tuition fees for up to 1,000 Scottish students who have refused to pay the community charge.

The action could be repeated throughout Britain in an effort to recoup poll tax debts incurred by tens of thousands of students. The government, which pays tuition fees to universities, is, however, likely to challenge the move in court in spite of urging local authorities to recover poll tax debts by all legal means.

An estimated 20,000 Scottish students have received final notices or summary warrants for non-payment. The implications for England and Wales, halfway through the first year of the tax, are enormous.

Strathclyde regional council, the biggest local authority in Scotland, has taken action against about 1,000 students, according to Ian Henley, its deputy director of finance. More stoppages are expected over coming months.

The council is owed more than £50 million in poll tax from last year, and Mr Henley said that the authority was legally obliged to try to recover that money. Collection by warrant sales was not favoured and students were unlikely to have any earnings.

"If they do not offer us details of their bank accounts, then we have no choice but to seek to recover the money from other sources of income, such as bursaries. Students have been fairly prominent among non-payers and we have to look at what action we can take against them."

Tuition fees are paid by the Scottish education department to colleges and universities. A spokesman for the Scottish Office said: "The secretary of state has been served with an arrestment order for community charge in respect of certain students at Scottish institutions. The Scottish education department has written to the bodies concerned pointing out that the tuition fee payment for 1990-91 will require to be adjusted if the arrestments are found to be valid."

He said, however, that the question of validity was not clear and had yet to be tested. "There has to be a court judgment on this and we will challenge the arrestment."

A spokeswoman for Strathclyde university said that, so far, it had been told that a total of £2,800 in respect of 33 of its 8,500 students could be deducted from the fee income in January. "We were astonished by this and will be taking legal advice on the matter. We feel that we have been put in an

invidious position by being forced to act as poll tax collectors." Glasgow university has been told that it stands to have £2,200 arrested on behalf of 26 students who have failed to pay the poll tax.

Donna McKinnon, Scottish secretary of the National Union of Students, said that she did not believe the arrestment order was legal.

"We are extremely concerned about the long-term implications about what they have done. It could open the floodgates to creditors to take similar action against students. It is a very dangerous precedent," she said.

Professor John Fort, principal of Stirling university, said: "We will need to challenge the regularity of this procedure. If fees are now going to be made vulnerable by this kind of move, then it means our financial position is going to be completely undermined."

Kirkcaldy council, West Yorkshire, is today launching its biggest drive against local people refusing to pay their poll tax.

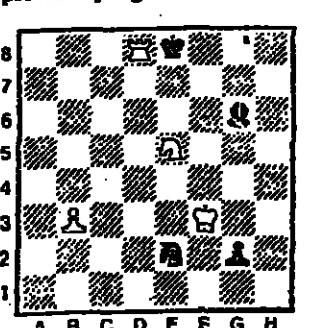
More than 12,000 people are being summonsed by the council at Huddersfield magistrates' court for non-payment of the community charge. Anti-poll tax groups are expected to demonstrate outside the court.

Brilliant and chaotic play leaves third game drawn

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

THE adjourned third game of the World Chess Championship in New York ended in a draw on the 53rd move after some brilliant play on both sides.

The first session of game 3, with Karpov playing white and Kasparov black, had witnessed some of the most chaotic, wild and unconventional battles ever seen at this level of chess. In the opening, a King's Indian Defence, Kasparov played what was previously regarded as a book



Final position in the drawn third game

blunder on move 9, which allowed Karpov to win rook for bishop, normally a decisive advantage.

Kasparov, however, succeeded in generating counterplay, and by the speed of his moves it was evident that he had prepared this idea in pre-match analysis. Then on the 17th move, the world champion offered a fresh sacrifice, one which electrified spectators and commentators alike.

Kasparov gave up his queen for just bishop, knight and pawn, an astounding concept that will fuel debate among chess theoreticians for years to come.

With his huge material advantage Karpov should, by the book, have won easily, but the former champion seemed unable to form a coherent plan and eventually in a desperate attempt to free his position he gave back the queen on the 25th move.

In the second session, on move 48, and with his back against the wall, Karpov made

a brilliant defensive decision, sacrificing a knight to eliminate the black passed pawn. On the 53rd move when the draw was agreed Kasparov would still have the advantage of bishop and knight against knight and pawn, but this is a material edge insufficient to force victory.

White	Black	White	Black
1 d4	Nf6	28 Nd4	Bc3
2 c4	g6	29 Nd2	h4
3 e3	g7	30 Nd1	h3
4 e4	g6	31 f3	g5
5 Nc3	0-0	32 g3	g5
6 Nf3	0-0	33 Nd3	h4
7 Bc3	0-0	34 Kf1	h5
8 d5	d5	35 Ke2	h5
9 Nc3	Qd8	36 Nd3	h5
10 Bc3	h5	37 Nd3	h5
11 Bc7	Qd7	38 Nd3	h5
12 Bc8	h5	39 Nd3	h5
13 Qd2	Nc5	40 Nd3	h5
14 Nd1	h5	41 Nd3	h5
15 0-0	h5	42 Nd3	h5
16 Nd3	h5	43 Nd3	h5
17 Nd3	h5	44 Nd3	h5
18 Nd3	h5	45 Nd3	h5
19 Nd3	h5	46 Nd3	h5
20 Nd3	h5	47 Nd3	h5
21 Nd3	h5	48 Nd3	h5
22 Nd3	h5	49 Nd3	h5
23 Nd3	h5	50 Nd3	h5
24 Nd3	h5	51 Nd3	h5
25 Nd3	h5	52 Nd3	h5
26 Nd3	h5	53 Nd3	h5
27 Nd3	h5		

Draw agreed

Inspection plan to fight illegal meat trade

By ROBIN YOUNG

FEARS that unfit meat from unlicensed knackers' yards is being sold for human consumption have prompted plans for a nationwide safety check. The food committee of the Institution of Environmental Health Officers will consider proposals today for Operation Meatbook II, the sequel to a 1979 campaign that led to several prosecutions and fines of up to £15,000.

Nick Hibbert, chairman of the organisation's meat legislation review group, said yesterday that most of the evidence that unfit meat was entering the human food supply was anecdotal, but there was enough of it to give rise to serious concern.

"It is unlikely that unfit meat is being sold by any supermarkets or high street butchers, but we are afraid it is

being sold cheaply from market stalls or the backs of vans, and finding its way into bulk supplies."

Chris Muford, who will be regional co-ordinator for the campaign in Wales and the Midlands, said: "We have already set up the machinery so that we can pass information between authorities and quickly decide who is best placed to act upon it. We believe that animals are being killed on farms and trans-

ported sometimes hundreds of miles to illegal processors."

David Maclean, the food minister, said yesterday that the government would be keen to take steps to stop illicit trade in unfit meat.

There have been two recent cases of unfit meat being sold for human consumption. In Llanelly, Dyfed, an inspector at Pwllbach slaughterhouse was dismissed when it was found that injured animals

had been certified fit for human consumption after being destroyed. The health officers' institution says it is impossible to be certain that cows infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy,

"mad cow" disease, were not among those certified fit. The case came to light after a complaint from a local school dinner lady. Environmental health officers in Somerset also intercepted a consign-

ment of meat from Pwllbach and condemned it as unfit.

At Taunton crown court in July, Norman and Michael Bramall of Oxspring, near Sheffield, were fined £8,000 each after admitting offering unfit meat for sale. Officers of Taunton Deane district council had found that beef the men had supplied showed signs of bruising, septic arthritis, peritonitis, pleurisy, abscesses, faecal contamination, putrefaction, and fly blow.

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Nature group tunes in to squirrels

By RONALD FAUX

IN THE wake of Oliver Cromwell comes *Sciurus carolinensis*. The Lord Protector was perhaps the last aggressor to arrive in the North-West and knock the local population about a bit. The grey squirrel is following his example, causing havoc among the resident red squirrels, or *Sciurus vulgaris*, which the Lancashire Trust for Nature Conservation has been prompted to investigate.

In 100 acres of woodland at Warton Crag, near Carnforth, Lancashire, Graeme Skelcher runs the trust's squirrel project, trapping red and grey varieties, fitting them with radio transmitters, and then plotting their movements. "There has been an invasion of greys, a bit from Warton, I suppose you could say, and the forecast is that within 15 years of

the greys getting in, the reds could disappear altogether," he said.

Mr Skelcher, a mathematics graduate, patrols the wood with a radio receiver that tracks the position of each rodent. Six red and three grey squirrels are presently sending out signals. Since the transmitters cost £70 each and red squirrels, in particular, are apt to be cavalier in their wanderings and go off-air without trace, equipping the project is expensive. The radio collars transmit across a one-mile radius for nine months before the signal fades.

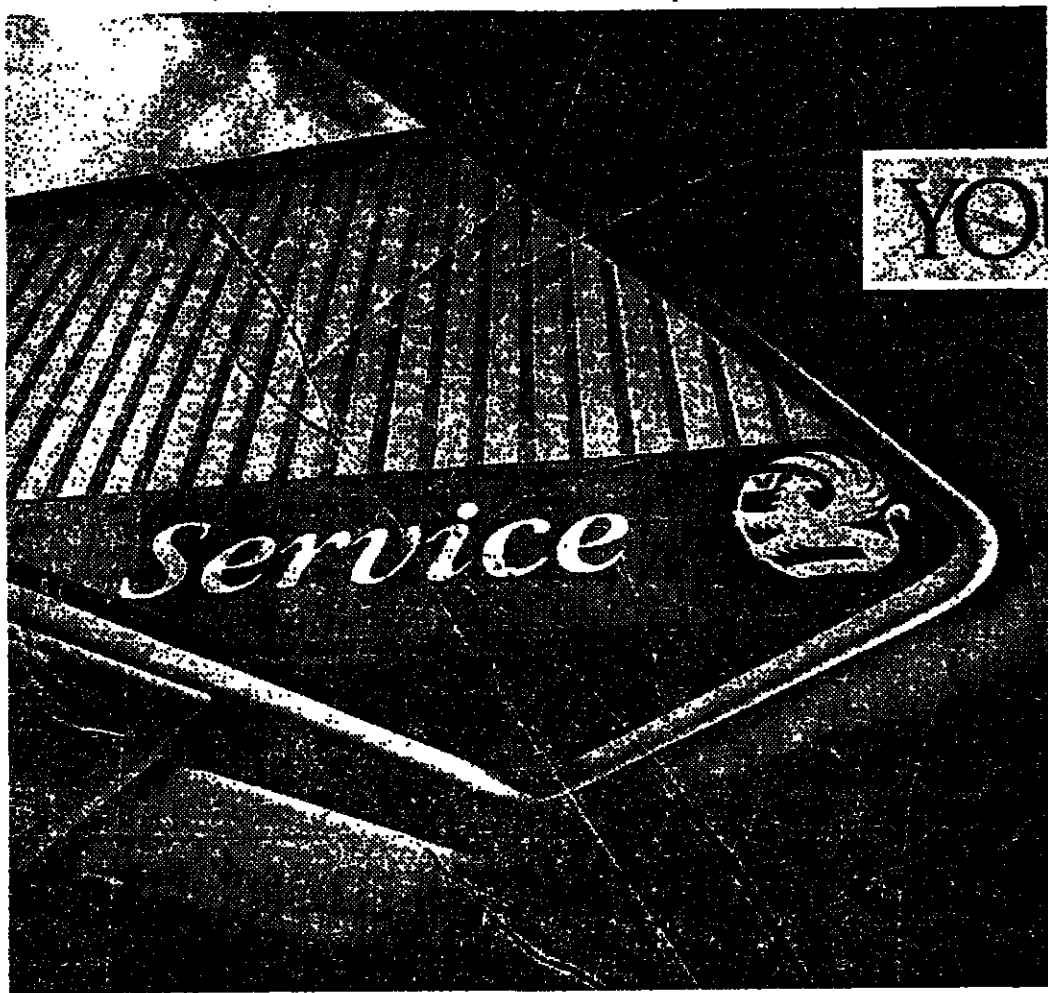
The study has so far found little pattern in a squirrel's life. The grey variety is indeed more successful at taking over territory and can survive on a wider variety of food in more crowded circumstances but, Mr Skelcher says, the out-

boarding instinct of both types seems to be more haphazard than books suggest. "A squirrel may bury surplus food, but will quickly forget the location. If the creature finds a cache it is most likely to be by accident or a store belonging to some other squirrel," he said.

Both varieties are enthusiastic second-home owners. Mr Skelcher, noting radio signals, has counted 26 drays, or nests, used regularly by only four squirrels.

The study follows research by London Zoo into ways of reintroducing red squirrels threatened by the grey type. Zoologists devised a food hopper and a drey that could be triggered only by the lighter red squirrel. Well-fed the red squirrels may have become, but West End cats and passing traffic proved to be perils from which the zoo could not save them.

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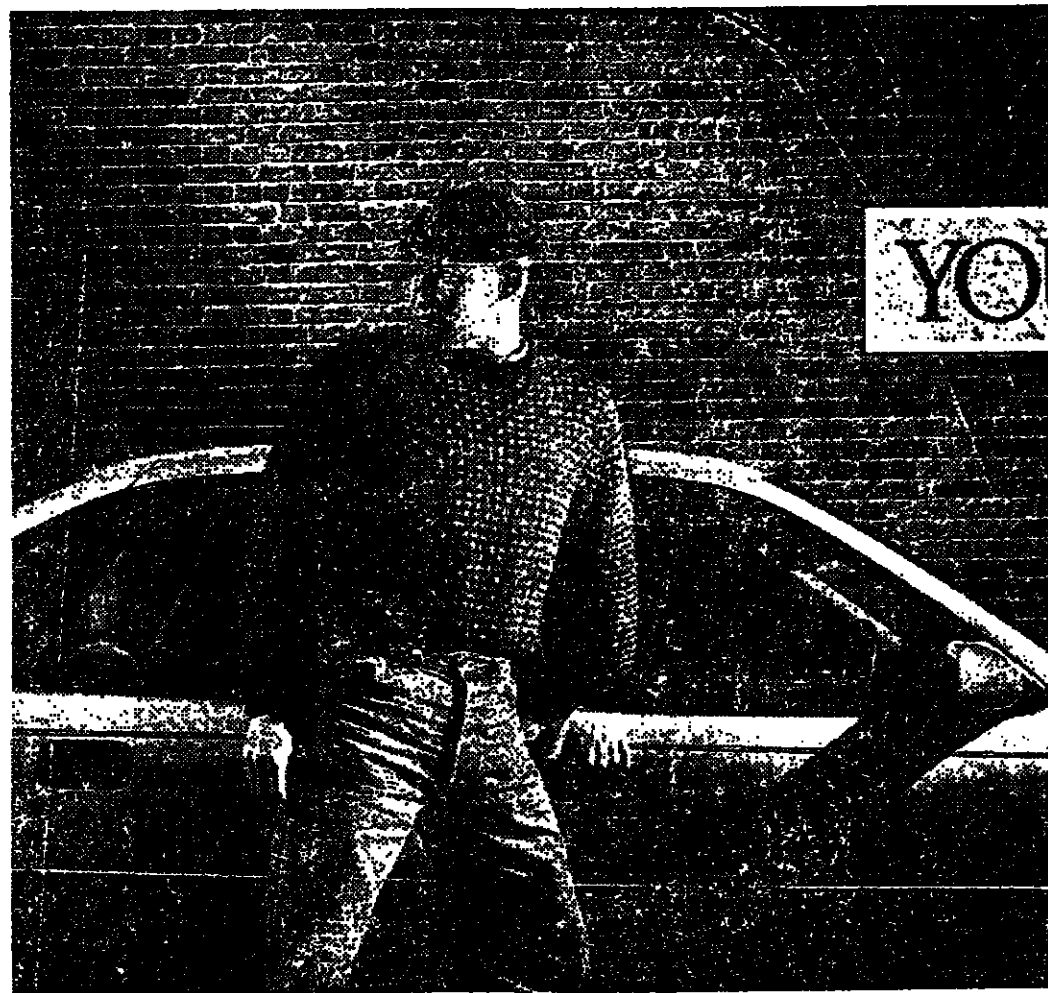
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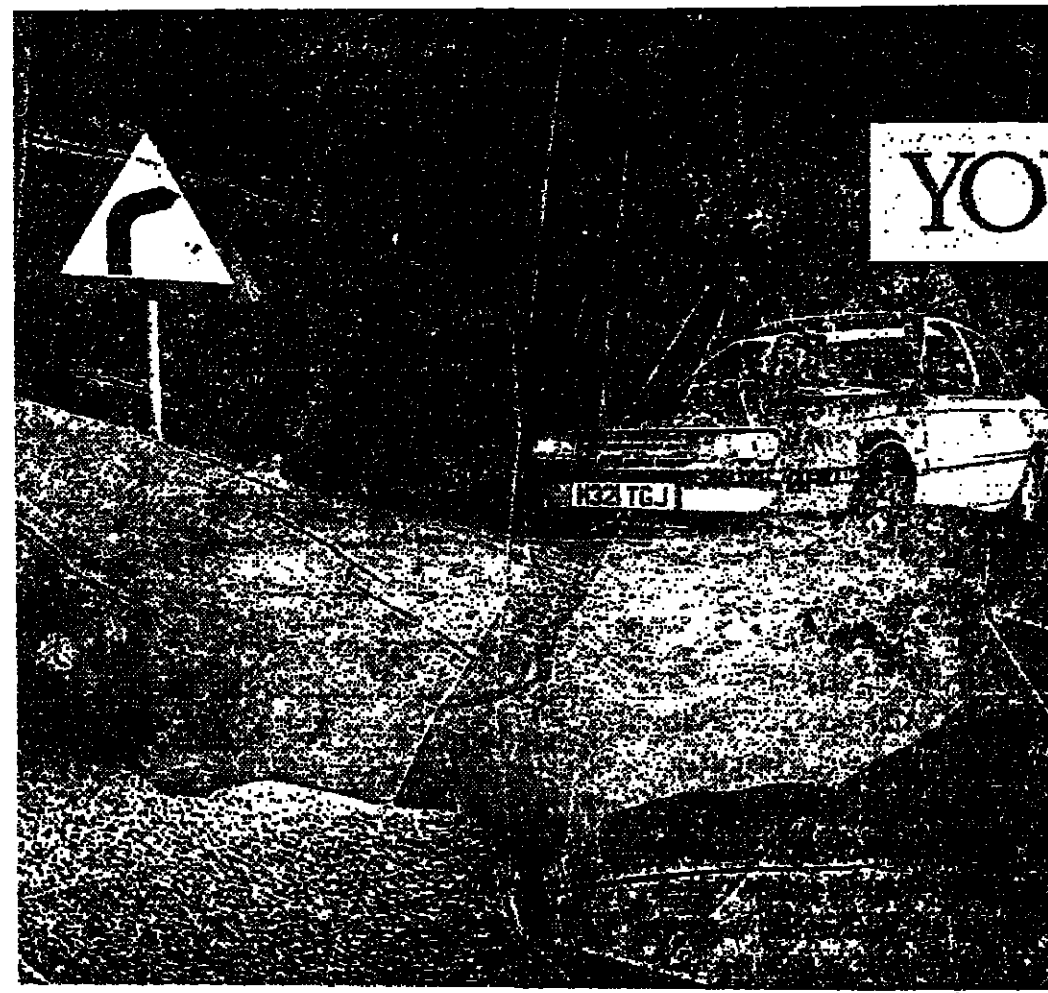
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ERM ENTRY

'Price to pay' for cabinet bungling

By SHEILA GUNN
POLITICAL REPORTER

BRITAIN will have to pay a painful price for the government's bungling of the economy over the past year, Paddy Ashdown predicted yesterday when demanding a five-point economic strategy in the wake of Britain's entry into the exchange-rate mechanism.

The Liberal Democrat leader dismissed as futile debates on Britain's entry and instead questioned the government's ability to be tough enough to take advantage of the opportunities opened up by ERM membership.

Divisions in the cabinet on economic and monetary union will damage economic performance and undermine confidence in sterling, as did the split between Margaret Thatcher and Nigel Lawson, he said.

"They sit like a timebomb at the heart of the government machine. The fuse has been lit. John Major (Chancellor) must now back up his anti-inflationary rhetoric with action."

At a Westminster press conference Mr Ashdown added: "Now that we are in the ERM, there can be no hiding place for the economy. The chancellor's policies must be based on an explicit recognition of that fact. The country and the markets need to know what will be the policy now we are in the exchange rate mechanism."

The Liberal Democrats strategy is:

- a commitment to the goal of a single European currency;
- tighter fiscal policy;
- targeted increases in public spending for education, training and transport;
- a commitment to move to the narrow bands of ERM next year;
- the Bank of England to be given responsibility for monetary policy independent of the government.

Mr Ashdown said that the government had failed to prepare Britain for the changed economic conditions of ERM membership.

"If the prime minister will not provide this leadership because of her anti-European prejudices, her chancellor must repeat his victory over ERM membership by ensuring that Britain plays a positive rather than a negative role in shaping economic and monetary union and the single currency."

Mr Ashdown, who said at his party conference that a Liberal Democrat government would be willing to raise income tax, added yesterday that John Major must stop all the government's talk of tax cuts.



Paddy Ashdown

BY-ELECTION

Ashdown looks to Eastbourne test

PADDY Ashdown will treat the Liberal Democrat vote in today's Eastbourne by-election as a test of the party's revived status as the credible alternative in Conservative-held constituencies at the next general election (Sheila Gunn writes).

Richard Hickmet, the Tory candidate, is confident of holding the seat left vacant by the murder of Ian Gow, but the Liberal Democrat leader said that the outcome was "too close to call".

Mr Ashdown told a press conference in London yesterday: "I expect not only a good result but [that] Labour will be unlikely to improve on its general election performance and may even get less."

The steady and determined build-up in the Liberal Democrats' fortunes in the past 18 months had pushed them past the point of being satisfied merely with a high profile campaign. "I hope it will convince certain commentators that the electorate is not to be judged by sitting in an armchair in London reading opinion polls. It will confirm the argument I have been making that where the party is challenged by the Tories we are the people who can beat the Tories."

Local issues and law and order have dominated the campaign, with Mr Hickmet, a

Ravenscraig pledge fails to satisfy the House

By JOHN WINDER, PARLIAMENTARY STAFF

BRITISH Steel's undertaking not to dismantle any of the Ravenscraig hot strip mill in Scotland before April 5 next year received only a muted welcome when it was announced in the Commons yesterday.

The undertaking by Sir Robert Scholey, chairman of British Steel, will give some time for consideration of a survey of the Scottish steel industry the final conclusions of which will be available in the new year. The report is being prepared for the Scottish Development Agency by independent consultants, Arthur D. Little.

Malcolm Rifkind, Scottish secretary, who has made clear his own disagreement with the British Steel decision to close the Ravenscraig hot strip mill, told MPs that he hoped the undertaking would give time for a full assessment of the study.

Mr Rifkind said that Sir Robert had indicated that British Steel had promised full co-operation in the preparation of the development agency survey of the prospects for the steel industry in Scotland. The minister added later that he shared Opposition concern about the future of the Clydesdale tube plant, about which Sir Robert had not been able to tell him of any decisions.

Opposition MPs expressed misgivings about the precise nature of the undertaking on the Ravenscraig plant and Donald Dewar, Labour spokesman on Scotland, insisted that there must be no removal or dismantling of plant before the report was available and could be assessed.

He said that the minister should force British Steel to come clean on the facts behind the closure of the hot strip mill. He should meet the chairman after the report was produced "to go into battle on behalf of the Scottish steel industry".

Tessie Conservative MPs demanded that developments of the profitable plant there should not be sacrificed to preference for Scotland.

George Robertson (Hamilton, Lab) said that there was deep concern among the trade unions about the position and they wanted to know whether yesterday's meeting Mr Rifkind had received answers to the questions from the Ravenscraig shop stewards that he had undertaken to put on their behalf. What confidence could the people of Scotland have in assurances from British Steel?

Mr Rifkind said that he had given Sir Robert Scholey the shop stewards' questions, as he had promised.

"I put to him the utility of answering those questions as much as he felt able to do."

Sir Robert had said that he would meet the chairman of the development agency, Sir David Nickson.

Tim Devlin (Stockton South, C) asked: "Did the secretary of state tell the chairman that the only way the long-term viability of the steel industry in this country can be guaranteed is if decisions on future investment

are made for valid commercial reasons only and not for political reasons?"

"Will he tell the trade unions that the most commercially competitive and productive steel plant in this country is on Teesside and that it would be a tragedy to delay investment there for the political machinations of the Labour party in Scotland?"

Mr Rifkind replied: "There is agreement on all sides that the future of the steel industry has to be decided on commercial grounds."

Malcolm Bruce, Liberal Democrat spokesman on Scotland, said that the meeting between Sir Robert and Mr Rifkind had been a meeting between private citizens because Mr Rifkind had effectively given up trying to influence British Steel decisions.

Was the development agency report likely to be ready in time to change the disastrous decisions on Scottish steel?

Mr Rifkind said that unless Mr Bruce was proposing renationalisation, he was exposing the bankruptcy of his first question. They expected preliminary conclusions on the survey before Christmas and final ones early in the new year. It was important that there was to be co-operation between British Steel and the development agency and that the two chairmen were to meet.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries, C) asked how they could assess the commercial judgment of British Steel when they did not know the facts on which they had taken the decision.

Mr Rifkind: "It is precisely for that reason that I and others were unable to say whether the conclusion reached by British Steel is justified."



Rifkind: received promise from British Steel chief

Double election battle begins

By OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ROY Hattersley launches today Labour's campaign to hold the marginal seat of Bradford North in a tough by-election contest next month.

The writs for by-elections in Bradford North and Bootle on Merseyside on November 8 were moved in the Commons by Derek Foster, the Opposition chief whip.

Labour remains ahead in the opinion polls, but anything short of a convincing victory in the Yorkshire seat would damage the party's efforts to portray itself as a government in waiting.

A complicating factor for party strategists is the decision by the Islamic party of Great Britain to field a candidate in a seat where the Muslim vote of about 7,000 has tradition-

ally gone to Labour. David Piddock, of the Islamic party, is unlikely to win, but Labour's fear is that he could deprive them of enough votes to ensure a Conservative victory in the seat which the late Pat Wall held in the 1987 general election with a majority of 1,633.

On the same day as polling in Bradford North, a by-election will take place in the safe Labour seat of Bootle, caused by Mike Carr's death.

Candidates in Bradford North include: Terry Rooney (Lab), Joy Atkin (C), David Ward (Lib Dem), Mike Knott (Grn) and Mr Piddock. In Bootle they include: Joe Benton (Lab), James Clappison (C) and John Cunningham (Lib Dem).

NATURE COUNCIL

'Wilder flights of fancy' on funding denied

By PETER MULLIGAN, PARLIAMENTARY STAFF

REPORTS that the cost of reorganising the Nature Conservancy Council into three parts might be £30 million a year were denied by the government last night. In the House of Lords, Lady Blatch, a junior environment minister, told peers that the cost was less than £10 million.

She used a statement before the report stage of the Environmental Protection bill continued to dispel what she called the "wilder flights of fancy" that had appeared in the media and been quoted in Parliament.

She said that exaggerated estimates of £20 million or even £30 million had been made by those who "shall we say, do not wish to see our proposals presented in the best light".

The actual estimate for extra staff and consequential costs such as accommodation was £9.18 million. There would be 294 more staff than at present and the government was allowing for consolidation of temporary posts as well as creating new ones.

She said: "This means that, far from there being a major increase in bureaucracy, there will be extra permanent posts in scientific grades and addi-

tional provision for policy and think-tank work."

The new proposals allowed for 1,350 publicly financed staff - 654 for the conservancy council in England, 225 for the Countryside Council for Wales and 385 for the conservancy council in Scotland. Another 86 would go to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

She added: "The new structure will be soundly based and, when it is operation, it should be able to do more in each country than the existing conservancy council. This is particularly true of Scotland and Wales."

She repeated the a commitment that "adequate resources" would be provided to cover reorganisation without damaging present conservation programmes.

The government, she said, had justified the case for reform: "In a nutshell, it is that separate agencies for each country will be more sensitive and accountable."

Her announcement was interrupted by Opposition peers who protested that they had not had advance warning and the House was adjourned for 25 minutes for behind-the-scenes discussions.

PRISONS

Tory MP predicts more jail riots

By ANDREW PIERCE

A SENIOR Tory backbench MP predicted yesterday that the prison system was facing "another Strangeways jail riot next year and blamed the government."

Sir Charles Irving, MP for Cheltenham, accused the Home Office of failing to heed warnings from prison officers, voluntary agencies and prisoners. He said: "We have had one disturbance after another."

When will the government learn? I predict that we will have another Strangeways on our hands next year."

Sir Charles was speaking at the launch, at the House of Commons, of the annual report of the Stonham Housing Association, a specialist organisation providing homes for 2,900 single homeless people, including many former offenders.

The MP, who is founder and chairman of the association, said: "We cannot seem to get it into the brains of those who are responsible that the frustrations and tensions within the prison system will lead to further terrible strains on the service."

"When will the government learn it must take out of the prisons the people who were put there after conviction for minor and trivial offences. Their continued imprisonment is counter-productive."

"I implore the Home Secretary: wake up to the fact voluntary agencies such as Stonham must have more money. If we did, we could expand our facilities to take some of the people who should not be in prison."

Stonham has more than 190 housing schemes located in every county in England and South Wales and has become one of the leading voluntary agencies for former prisoners.

Defeat likely in abortion vote

Leading Roman Catholic peers look certain to lose their final attempt today to tighten the abortion laws during this Parliament.

The Duke of Norfolk, the premier Roman Catholic peer, Lord Rawlinson of Ewell, Lady Cox and Lord Ashbourne will lead the protests against late abortions when the Lords debate amendments made by MPs to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology bill.

They have tabled an amendment demanding that doctors must try to deliver babies alive unless they are suffering from a life-threatening handicap. The whips predict that it will be defeated.

Thatcher costs £8m

The prime minister cost the taxpayer more than £8 million in the last financial year according to figures she issued yesterday.

In Commons written replies, Margaret Thatcher said that the total cost of all her offices in 1989-90 was £7,704,396. That included salaries, national pension liability, and the grant to the Chequers Trust.

She said that the total cost of her travel and that of her staff during the year was £948,656. Official hospitality cost £27,427.

Devolution 'disaster'

Malcolm Rifkind, Scottish secretary, firmly rejected demands for independence or devolution for Scotland. At Commons question time he said that Scotland would pay a devastating price for such policies.

Labour's proposals for a Scottish assembly would bring extra taxes, he said, and the Scottish National party's plans for an independent country would mean that Scots living in England would be foreigners.

Ewing elected by SNP

Margaret Ewing, Scottish Nationalist MP for Moray, has been unanimously re-elected as leader of the SNP group of five MPs in Parliament. She has been leader since 1987. Mrs Ewing was nominated by Alex Salmond, MP for Banff and Buchan, the overall party leader.

Parliament today

Commons (2.30): Questions: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Prime Minister. Debate on public accounts committee reports on sale of Rover and of Royal Ordnance. Lords (3): Human fertilisation and embryology bill. Commons amendments.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

West 'swallowing the KGB line'

By RICHARD FORD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WESTERN leaders were criticised last night for giving uncritical support to President Gorbachev despite his failure to put his leadership to a democratic vote throughout the Soviet Union.

Dr David Owen, the former foreign secretary, accused politicians in the West of swallowing KGB propaganda in their dismissal of Boris Yeltsin and of putting too much faith in Mr Gorbachev and his attempt to show that there was a third way between Stalin's communism and Western-style democracy.

The former SDP leader urged the West to be more questioning of Mr Gorbachev and the changes he was attempting to introduce into the Soviet Union. He said that, although the Soviet president deserved the Nobel Peace Prize, "the largely uncritical euphoria that surrounds it in the West is troubling". He

added: "Our political leaders have placed too many bets on Gorbachev; they have swallowed KGB propaganda against Boris Yeltsin and they would be well advised now to hedge their bets."

Dr Owen said the West should judge Mr Gorbachev for what he was, "a remarkable, pragmatic and adaptable leader", who had managed to mastermind the transfer of power from the Communist party to a power elite that he now headed. It was, however, dangerous nonsense to accept that that group believed in genuine democracy or a market economy. Dr Owen said in a lecture at the Cambridge Union.

The policies followed by the Mr Gorbachev had been dictated by his recognition that the Soviet Union must retreat from an "imperial" empire that had resulted in financial difficulties and

a grossly over-extended military apparatus. "We should be particularly careful not to fall for the propaganda that all these changes stem from the goodness of the heart and the general enlightenment of the political leaders."

Dr Owen said Western leaders should not feed the Soviet leadership's delusion that the Soviet Union could give up the satellite countries of Eastern Europe and consolidate around the present boundaries of the USSR.

He added that the West would do Mr Gorbachev no favours if it gave the impression that his third way between old-style communism and a true Western-style democracy had a future. Nor, Dr Owen said, should he be insulated from legitimate pressure from Western democracies to put his leadership to the vote.

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Hurd lost in political minefield of Middle East

From RICHARD OWEN IN JERUSALEM

DOUGLAS Hurd, the foreign secretary, said yesterday that he was "too well-trained to be angry", as he surveyed the debris of his Middle East mission from a sofa in the British consulate in east Jerusalem. But he had the chastened and slightly dazed look of a man who — like so many before him — had entered the minefield of Arab-Israeli politics with what he thought was due care and attention only to find mines blowing up all around his feet.

Even for someone of Mr Hurd's skill and experience, the passions aroused in the aftermath of the Temple Mount killings 10 days ago have proved too hot to handle. Both Israelis and Palestinians are on short fuses. "You cannot please both sides at the best of times," one diplomat said yesterday.

According to this view, Mr Hurd issued a tough condemnation of Israel before arriving, failed to follow it through on arrival in order not to offend his already displeased Israeli hosts, but in doing so thoroughly alienated the Palestinian side.

On the Israeli side, Mr Hurd, despite a new and warm relationship with David Levy, the Israeli foreign minister, evidently failed to persuade the right-wing government of Yitzhak Shamir to change its mind and accept the United Nations mission investigating the Temple Mount affair. Mr Hurd's argument that "the last thing we want is a long run of endless security council debates on Arab-Israeli affairs fell on deaf ears."

On the Palestinian side, the mine which exploded yesterday took the form of a leaked misquotation. Palestinian anger, already fuelled by what the Arabs see as equivocal British support for the Palestinian cause, boiled over when Mr Hurd was quoted by the Israeli media as having told members of the Knesset (parliament) foreign affairs committee in private session that he was "absolutely opposed to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state".

Mr Hurd insisted he had made no such statement. He had only reiterated the British view that the Palestinians should have self-determination, and whether this led to a state of Palestine would be a matter for negotiation.

By the time this clarification reached Palestinian leaders, however, the damage was done. Twenty-eight leading Palestinians due to meet the foreign secretary called off the encounter, reportedly at the instigation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a PLO faction.

Some Israeli said the leaked report was a deliberate act by one of the three Israeli

MPs Mr Hurd met; Eliahu Ben-Elissar and Uzi Landau of Likud, and Yitzhak Rabin of Labour. The Palestinians, sources said, had fallen into an Israeli trap by taking Israeli media leaks at face value instead of waiting to see what Mr Hurd had to say.

Deliberate or not, the damage caused by the misquotation could have been limited. The report was the main story on Israeli television news on Tuesday evening, while Mr Hurd was at a dinner given by Mr Levy. Yesterday, however, Mr Hurd said he had known nothing of the report until yesterday morning, when it was reproduced in Israeli newspapers.

Having failed to issue a correction on Tuesday evening, British officials sought to reassure Radwan Abu Ayash, head of the Arab Journalists Association and one of the leading Palestinians due to meet Mr Hurd when he telephoned the British consulate at 8.30am. By then, Mr Hurd was on a tour of United Nations headquarters and St John's eye hospital in east Jerusalem.

It was not until mid-morning, when Mr Hurd reached a centre for the disabled at Beit Jalla on the West Bank that he challenged the Israeli reports. Answering questions from a Arab physiotherapy student, 22, the foreign secretary said: "There is something in the newspaper which is not right." He added: "Can I say something to you? We believe the Palestinians should have the right to determine their own future. We do not say there should be a state. It is for the Palestinians to decide their future."

For the Arab leaders waiting in Jerusalem, this was not enough. They were in any case incensed by Mr Hurd's statement — accurately reported — that although the PLO should be involved in the peace process, it had "made a big mistake by finding excuses for the invasion of Kuwait".

"Britain clearly does not recognise that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, nor does it want us to have a state," said Professor Saeb Erakat, of An-Najah university in Nablus. "But these form the backbone of our policy."

The Palestinians were dismissive of the UN resolution on Temple Mount. Just as Mr Levy had condemned the British compromise draft as "one-sided and hypocritical", so the Palestinians attacked it in a statement handed to Mr Hurd as "a delayed and diluted resolution" from an organisation which had failed for 23 years to end "the brutal and oppressive Israeli occupation".

Leading article, page 15



Taking cover: a Palestinian woman about to try on a gas mask at the village of Beit Hanina, in east Jerusalem, as Israeli troops and civil defence personnel began distributing anti-chemical warfare kits to Arabs

Moscow's optimistic envoy tries to draw hope from Iraqi position

By OUR DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

IF THERE were a prize for refusing to take no for an answer, Yevgeni Primakov would surely be a candidate.

President Gorbachev appears to have instructed him to keep alive hopes that Iraq could be persuaded to withdraw from Kuwait in return for concessions. The Soviet emissary continued yesterday to promote that idea despite outright rejection by both Baghdad and Washington. Britain is equally opposed.

Mr Primakov, making a tour of Western capitals, has hinted that terms for an Iraqi pullout were discussed when he met President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad last week. It is thought that these would include a revision of the Iraq-Kuwait border giving Baghdad the whole of the Rumaila oilfield and the islands of Bubiyan and Warba, a secure outlet to the Gulf, and a diplomatic arrangement to save face.

Baghdad strongly denied this yesterday, insisting that it will never give up what has become its 19th province. The official news agency INA quoted an information ministry source as saying: "No Iraqi official has or ever will say that Kuwait is not part of

Iraq. Iraq does not have two policies."

It was not Baghdad's first denial, but Mr Primakov seemed to have ignored previous statements. He told reporters in Rome on Tuesday that Moscow was "optimistic despite everything — otherwise we wouldn't be here". He believed that Iraq would be ready to negotiate a settlement provided the West did not set ultimatums or threaten military action.

His reason for saying this in Rome was that Italy holds the presidency of the European Community, whose foreign ministers are to meet in Luxembourg on Monday. The Italians are better disposed towards a negotiated approach than the British or French.

The suspicion in Washington and London is that Mr Primakov's mission has much to do with Moscow's wish to avoid having to send forces to the Gulf. Eduard Shevardnadze, the foreign minister, has said it would do so only in response to a security council resolution setting up a UN force, and has promised that the Soviet parliament would have a chance to vote on it.

President Bush is to see Mr Primakov on Friday and will

want to know whether his hopes are based on more than wishful thinking.

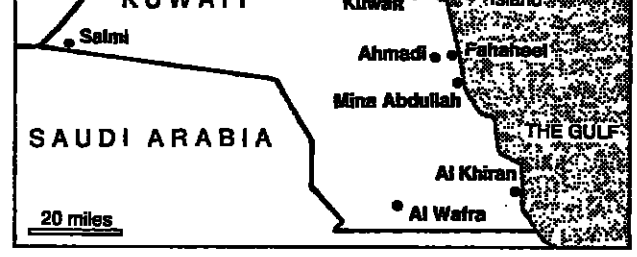
Whitehall sources believe that a new map of Kuwait which Baghdad has been sent to Iraqi missions abroad forms part of a confusion strategy. It shows that only the southern part of Kuwait lies within the new 19th province.

A line has been drawn across the old map and the northern part transferred to the former province of Basra, renamed Saddamiyat al-Mitla.

As this northern part includes the Rumaila oilfield and the strategic islands, the map has encouraged speculation that Baghdad might negotiate its withdrawal.

Both Washington and London say they will settle for nothing less than a total withdrawal without face-saving compromises.

IRAQ'S REVISED MAP OF KUWAIT



Britons in 'foolhardy' desert escape

By OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THREE Britons have escaped from Iraq by driving 200 miles across the desert to Saudi Arabia, keeping off the roads, it was disclosed yesterday.

Their initiative proved controversial, being seen as courageous by some but foolhardy by others. A hospital which employs two of them criticised it as "dangerous and irresponsible", and it was contrary to British Embassy advice.

Harold Walker, the British ambassador, yesterday repeated his view that the 400 Britons still in Iraq but not detained should not try to escape. There should be no

heroics and they should not run risks. Whitehall sources confirmed that the implications might have for everybody else who has remained in Baghdad.

It was done against the strong advice of both the British and Irish ambassadors in Iraq. Mr Keenan said there would be a feeling of some concern among staff remaining at the Ibn Al Bitar hospital. However, he did not believe the escape would jeopardise the "special status" granted to the hospital by the Iraqi authorities last week.

Parc has 430 employees at the hospital, including 200

Irish and 43 British staff. Last month, three Irishmen unconnected with Parc appeared in an Iraqi court charged with trying to leave the country without the proper documentation.

TOKYO: Iraq has released a Japanese hostage into the custody of the Japanese embassy in Baghdad and two or three others would be freed on Thursday, Kyodo news agency said (Reuters reports). Japanese television said that Iraq planned to release four Japanese in the next two days, according to the chairman of the Iraqi national assembly, Saadi Mahdi Saleh.

British protest after Baghdad rejects status of diplomats

By ANDREW McEWEN, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

BRITAIN has protested to Baghdad after being told that its diplomats evacuated from Kuwait will not be given diplomatic status in Iraq.

Iraq said that the eight diplomats would be treated as ordinary citizens. This will be seen as implicit warning that they might join the 300 Britons detained under Iraq's "human shield" policy, though no explicit threat has been made.

This is a further example of the Iraqi flagrant disregard for international law," a foreign office spokesman said, describing it as a breach of articles 40 and 44 of the Vienna Convention on diplomatic status. Azmi al-Salhi, the Iraqi ambassador, was summoned to the Foreign Office on Tuesday and told of Britain's displeasure.

Britain is one of only six countries still defying an Iraqi order to close their embassies in Kuwait. Others, including the French embassy, are likely to withdraw this week after exhausting their supplies of food, water and fuel.

The British embassy was run down from 22 to ten diplomats before Iraq's deadline of August 24, and most of those withdrawn were sent home, as were the dependents. Britain then cut the number to four by sending six to Baghdad under Iraqi military escort. A further two were pulled out ten days ago, leaving only Michael Weston, the Ambassador, and Larry Banks still in the building, which remains blockaded by Iraqi troops.

Britain informed Iraq that the eight were being added to the British Embassy in the Baghdad, but after a delay this has been rejected. The men continue to work at the embassy and to live either there or with other British diplomats.

They are: Tony Millson and Donald Macaulay, John Raine, second secretary; Martin Roper, vice consul; David McDonough, immigration officer; David Belgrave, assistant management officer; Adam Perks, registrar; Brian McKee, security officer.

Baghdad's move puts them among the 400 Britons still living in Iraq and not under detention. A further 300 Britons are detained in Iraq under the human shield policy after being transferred from Kuwait.

Mr al-Salhi was also told that Britain reserves its right to claim compensation for losses caused by the annexation of Kuwait. The atmosphere of his 11-minute meeting with David Gore-Booth, assistant under-secretary, was described as "correct", usually a diplomatic way of saying stiff.

In the meantime several British women evacuated from Kuwait and Iraq are considering returning to join their husbands, despite strong advice from the Foreign Of-

fice and the Gulf Support Group not to go.

"The Iraqi Embassy in London said it had issued several visas and would welcome requests from other women wishing to return.

The Foreign Office described this as "cynical manipulation" and said the women would be taking a great risk. Joanna Copley, co-founder of the Gulf Support Group, also advised women to refuse.

Threat to boycott Cairo poll

Cairo — In a determined attempt to force the pace of democratic reform, much of Egypt's opposition is threatening an unprecedented boycott of the general election scheduled for November 29 (Christopher Walker writes).

A senior official of the right-wing Wafd party announced yesterday that it would boycott the poll, announced last week, in protest against unfair election conditions. He said the Muslim Brotherhood and two other opposition parties, Labour and the Liberals, were planning to join the boycott.

An Amnesty International report meanwhile criticised torture and other breaches of human rights in Egypt.

Saddam's spy

BOON — President Saddam Hussein was supplied with all the original secrets of Operation Desert Shield by a spy caught working inside the German foreign ministry, according to German counter-intelligence. Police say the spy, aged 35, is a convert to Islam who called himself "Mohammed", and is believed to have accepted an initial payment of DM20,000 (£7,000).

US 'in control'

Amsterdam — America will take the initiative in the Gulf if war breaks out, Vice-Admiral Henry Mauz, who commands the US Middle East fleet, said. He told the Dutch newspaper, *De Telegraaf*, that the Western allies would be asked to join any American action, but the US Navy "was strong enough on its own to cope with every conceivable crisis situation" and would not hesitate to do so.

Kuwaiti concern

Vienam — Kuwait might not be able to continue to finance the international military presence in the Gulf beyond the end of this year, Abdul Hamid al-Awadhi, Kuwait's ambassador here said yesterday (Susan Masterman writes). Kuwait was "the country which has been victimised and our revenue has been cut off". It was drawing on its investments and could not continue to do so indefinitely.

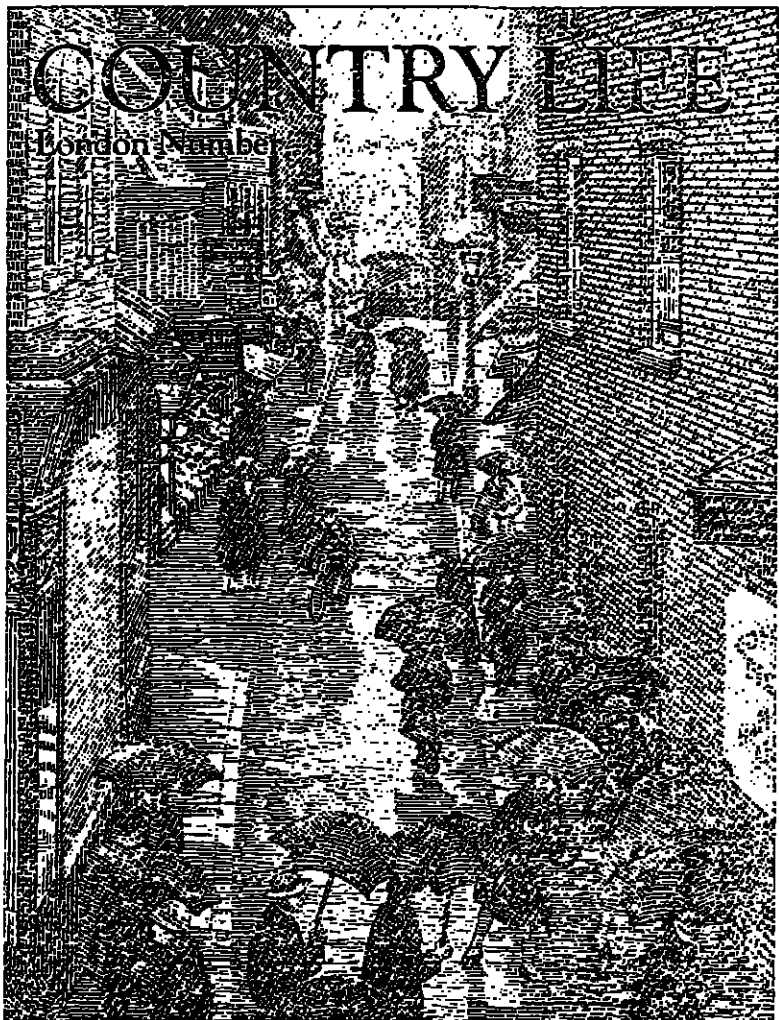
Foreign accent

New York — An American with no knowledge of foreign languages began speaking with a Scandinavian accent after a stroke, a researcher claims. The man had foreign accent syndrome, a rare condition that scientists say may shed light on how different parts of the brain contribute to spoken language. (AP)

Travel time cut

Berne — Because of decisions taken by the European Goods Trains Timetable Conference, travel times are to be shortened on some Swiss railway routes to northern Germany and Austria beginning in 1991. (AFP)

London Number



- Jonathan Hurrett on how London's traffic agony might be cured
 - Food on the walls: architecture on the plate: the capital's latest restaurants
 - Post-Modernism post haste: the scaffolding comes down on London's newest buildings
 - The Church of England's Sistine Chapel
 - Critics' choice of the winter's art events
- Plus the usual informed coverage of the property market, gardening, wildlife, conservation, sport and fashion

COUNTRY LIFE
EVERY THURSDAY

'The Captain' fills vacuum left by Aoun

From JUAN CARLOS GUMUCIO IN BIKFAYA, LEBANON

"THE Captain" is a big, balding militiaman with a thick brown moustache, designer spectacles and, since the defeat of General Michel Aoun five days ago, is playing a new role in the Christian enclave of Lebanon. As the commander of the Syrian Social National Party in the mountains northeast of Beirut, he and his men have gladly filled the vacuum left by the retreat of General Aoun's forces.

Under the Syrian-backed plan to extend President Hrawi's authority to the enclave, the Captain would have to disarm his men and leave. But yesterday, as President Hrawi's tanks moved slowly into the mountains, he was not contemplating moving. Far from it. Sipping coffee and smoking cigarettes with Lebanese army officers at the SSNP's new office, just off Bikfaya's main street, the Captain — he likes to be called

that and would not reveal his name — looks like a man with a mission. Sooner or later, his ragtag army of bearded youths with red headbands and new fatigues could be fighting on behalf of the Syrians.

The mainly Christian SSNP is a curious and ambitious Lebanese organisation. It advocates Syrian nationalism and proposes the unification of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Kuwait and Cyprus. Its roots are in the mountains of Lebanon. So, when General Aoun's 5th Brigade was defeated in the nearby hills of Dbour Choueir on Saturday, the Captain led his lorries and military vehicles into the heart of the rival Phalange Party's country.

He remembers his entrance into Bikfaya well. "Here I was driving my 'Jeep' when I saw this Phalangist who killed my brother Walid in 1980. He threw himself at me. He was

crying, pleading with me to spare his life. I could have shot him right there and he knew it. But I told him that I had not come to seek revenge. He could not believe it," he added with a chuckle.

Then there is a long puff of smoke. "We are here for different reasons," he says. One of them, the Captain says, is to hold Bikfaya until the Lebanese Army arrives in full. But perhaps the most important — which he does not admit — is connected with Syria's mid-term objective in Lebanon: the neutralisation of the Phalangist "Lebanese Forces" militia of Samir Geagea. The Captain refers to them as "the most dangerous and destructive thing in Lebanon".

Despite Mr Geagea's welcome of the Syrian army presence in east Beirut, he still refuses to give up the strip of coastal territory running north from Beirut's port. President

Hrawi and the Syrians have apparently decided to be patient with Mr Geagea.

The government is expected to be reorganised next week and it is expected that Mr Geagea will be invited to join it, provided he dismantles his powerful militia. If he does not, the Syrians will probably ask the Captain and Elie Hobeika, the leader of the Syrian-wing of the "Lebanese Forces" to persuade him.

Mr Hobeika, the militia commander who led the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Chatilla refugee camps in 1982, has personal scores to settle with Mr Geagea. He was ousted as head of the "Lebanese Forces" in 1986 and forced out of the enclave by Mr Geagea for being too complacent with Damascus.

Mr Hobeika's return to the enclave on the back of the Syrian tanks has automatically provoked fears of a new

inter-Christian conflict. Mr Georges Saade, the leader of the Phalange party, the largest Christian party, has already accused Mr Hobeika of harassment and revenge attacks and yesterday warned that his followers are ready to confront threats.

The Syrians are making it clear that the SSNP is bound to make a comeback. On Tuesday night Syrian soldiers were reported to have freed a number of inmates from the Roumieh prison. Yesterday, the newspaper *An Nida*, the organ of the pro-Syrian Lebanese communist party, reported that among those freed was Habib al-Charout, the reputed assassin of president-elect Bashir Gemayel, who was killed by a bomb explosion in 1982. Mr Charout is one of the heroes of the SSNP. And, just like the Captain's men, he could become an unexpected nightmare for the "Lebanese Forces".

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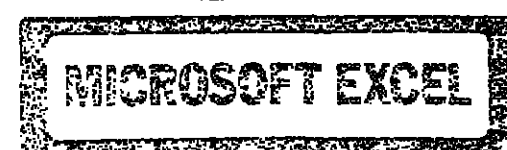
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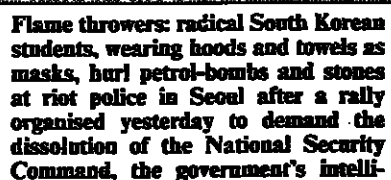
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FROM PETER STOTHARD, US EDITOR IN WASHINGTON

Mr Bush, as well as higher rates for top income-tax payers. Republican senators continued to make clear that they would accept no rise in income tax rates, even in return for capital gains concessions. Some Republican votes are almost certain to be needed

Anatole Kaletsky, page 14

gence arm. Meanwhile, in talks in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang yesterday, South Korean demands for mutual recognition were rejected because "such an action would perpetuate the peninsula's division" (AP reports from Seoul). You Hyong

Mak, North Korea's prime minister, meeting Kang Young Hoon, his South Korean counterpart, said the South's policy was aimed at maintaining the status quo. Although North Korea's reaction was expected, South Korean officials viewed it as discouraging.

FROM ANDREW LYCETT
IN ADDIS ABABA

Wolde is one of the growing band of Ethiopians disaffected from President Mengistu's military regime and, unlike even a couple of years ago, willing to say so. In May, after the execution of 12 generals involved in a coup plot

**FROM GAVIN BELL
IN JOHANNESBURG**

Warning by Malay

By M. G. G. PILLAI IN KUALA LUMPUR

The PBS-led state government has felt short-changed by the federal government. It

Tunku Razaleigh has now won over three parties from the National Front. The PBS is expected to be returned in Sabah. He only has to be

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Ukrainian hunger-strikers get their first taste of victory

WEARING a white head band with the inscription "I'm on hunger strike," one activist swigged water under the warm autumn sun. "It's my tenth day without food but I do take water," Taras said. Some 200 others, recognisable by their headbands, are doing likewise. A few have been on absolute deprivation but of these, two were taken away by ambulance and put in intensive care yesterday.

Around Taras, aged 30, supporters in an assortment of coloured headwear moved about with herb tea, fruit juices and water for those in white headbands. Among the recipients was Zosya, a grandmother aged 53. "My granddaughter joined the strike and I

Ukraine's president has thrown the public a bone with Vitali Masol's resignation as prime minister. But as Nick Worrall reports from Kiev, that may not stop clamour for reform

stand for what she stands for so I joined her," Zosya said. It was her third day without food.

Next to her, amid the hundred or so tents, two teenage girls sat sipping herb tea. "It was a great joy for us to hear that Masol would resign," said Natalya. "Yes, our first big victory," said Olyana. "We'll be here until they give us everything we want." They seemed to be having a good time. So did the thousands

of passers-by, many of whom were shouting in support. Others bought flowers from street sellers and handed them to students.

The huge crowds packing the city centre and constant disruption from marches have provoked fears that the conservative authorities will use force to clear the city. That worry increased when students succeeded three days ago in setting up a small 12-tent camp outside the main door of parliament, set on a hill above the mighty river Dnepr. Some deputies from the 239-strong majority conservative bloc of the Communist Party, which dominates the 450-seat parliament, are calling for a state of emergency.

There are 33 hunger strikers here, eight of them opposition deputies. By yesterday, more than 1,000 police had been drafted in to protect parliament. Only regular uniforms were visible around the building, but men in riot gear could be seen in the forest near by and two vehicles with water cannons were outside the health ministry. Dozens of lorries and buses betrayed the presence of police reservists.

Amid a sudden commotion in

the crowd, a gap opened and three priests and two nuns from the Ukrainian Catholic Church, banned by Stalin in 1941 and still not officially reinstated by Moscow, walked through to chant blessings to the activists.

A benign watcher was burlly Major-General Valentin Nedrigailo, commander of Kiev police, imposing in grey gaiters, red patches and capband. Asked if he would be ordered to disperse the students by force, he said that since Kiev council had agreed to allow the protest, his men's function was simply to keep order. "This we are doing," he said. "And we are also providing protection for the demonstrators against those who disagree with

them. This has brought us closer together." So did he sympathise with their demands? "I think everything they want will be fulfilled in time. But perhaps the young people are a little impatient."

This evoked sharp disagreement from Larissa Skorik, a radical woman deputy who joined the hunger strike last Saturday. "But we are making progress," she said. "The government is frightened by what's happening and there are more than a million people, perhaps two million now, supporting the demonstration. There are tent cities springing up elsewhere in the Ukraine."

But Miss Skorik believed the government could become des-

perate and resort to military force, as in Azerbaijan in January, when 162 people died, or in Georgia in April 1989, when troops killed 20 demonstrators. "I think, though, that the police would not be happy about violence. It's possible they would even stand between the military and the people."

President Leonid Kravchuk has thrown the demonstrators a bone with the announcement that his prime minister will resign. But with popular opposition growing daily he may not be able to resist pressure to go further. And that would signal the end of communist power in the Ukraine which, after Russia, is the Soviet Union's most populated and productive republic.

Sombre MPs prepare reply on Gorbachev market reform

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

COMMITTEES and commissions of the Soviet parliament met behind closed doors yesterday to draft their response to what is regarded as positively President Gorbachev's last word on shifting the nation from central planning to a market economy without provoking a revolution.

Committee members would say nothing about their deliberations, which were believed to be subdued. A deputy chairman of the economic reform commission said its meeting had been completed within the morning and he did not want to say more because his words would "only be distorted". What had happened was "no subject for a telephone conversation", but he would not agree to a meeting.

However, the silence from the committee rooms was more than compensated for by the uproar occasioned by a stinging attack from Boris Yeltsin, the president of the Russian Federation, on the new economic document. His immediate dismissal of it as an attempt to keep the "command administrative system" in power was widely interpreted as marking the end of the uneasy coalition he had joined with President Gorbachev at the beginning of August and the start of open warfare between the Soviet leadership and the federation. There are more subtle interpretations of his re-

marks, however, in which he was careful not to close the door completely on co-operation with Mr Gorbachev. According to this alternative view, Mr Yeltsin, a master of the new-style Soviet politics, was making his first real bid for a place in the leadership, not instead of Mr Gorbachev, but alongside him.

Strikingly absent from the options Mr Yeltsin outlined for Russia in the light of the new economic document was any suggestion that the federation should split from the union. His programme has called only for Russia to be allowed to run its own affairs within a looser federal state.

The first option he proposed on Tuesday was for the Russian Federation to introduce its own currency and tax system and demand a division of property between the centre and the republic — but not a political division. His second option was for partial co-operation with the centre in the expectation that the centre would abandon its diluted version after six months and join the faster Russian programme.

His third option, however, was the most telling. This was for a national coalition government in which some ministers would be appointed by the president, and others by "supporters of radical change", presumably including himself. The only condition he set was the departure of Nikolai Ryzhkov, the prime minister.

The terms in which Mr Yeltsin criticised Mr Gorbachev's latest document lend credence to the view that his move was more a bid for joint power than a declaration of war. He complained that the proposed retention by the centre of many powers amounted to an attempt to preserve the old bureaucratic system.

But Mr Yeltsin must have been well aware of the president's views. Mr Gorbachev has remained unswerving on three points: central fiscal control; a single currency; and a single customs regime. His priority has always been to keep the Soviet Union a recognisably single state.

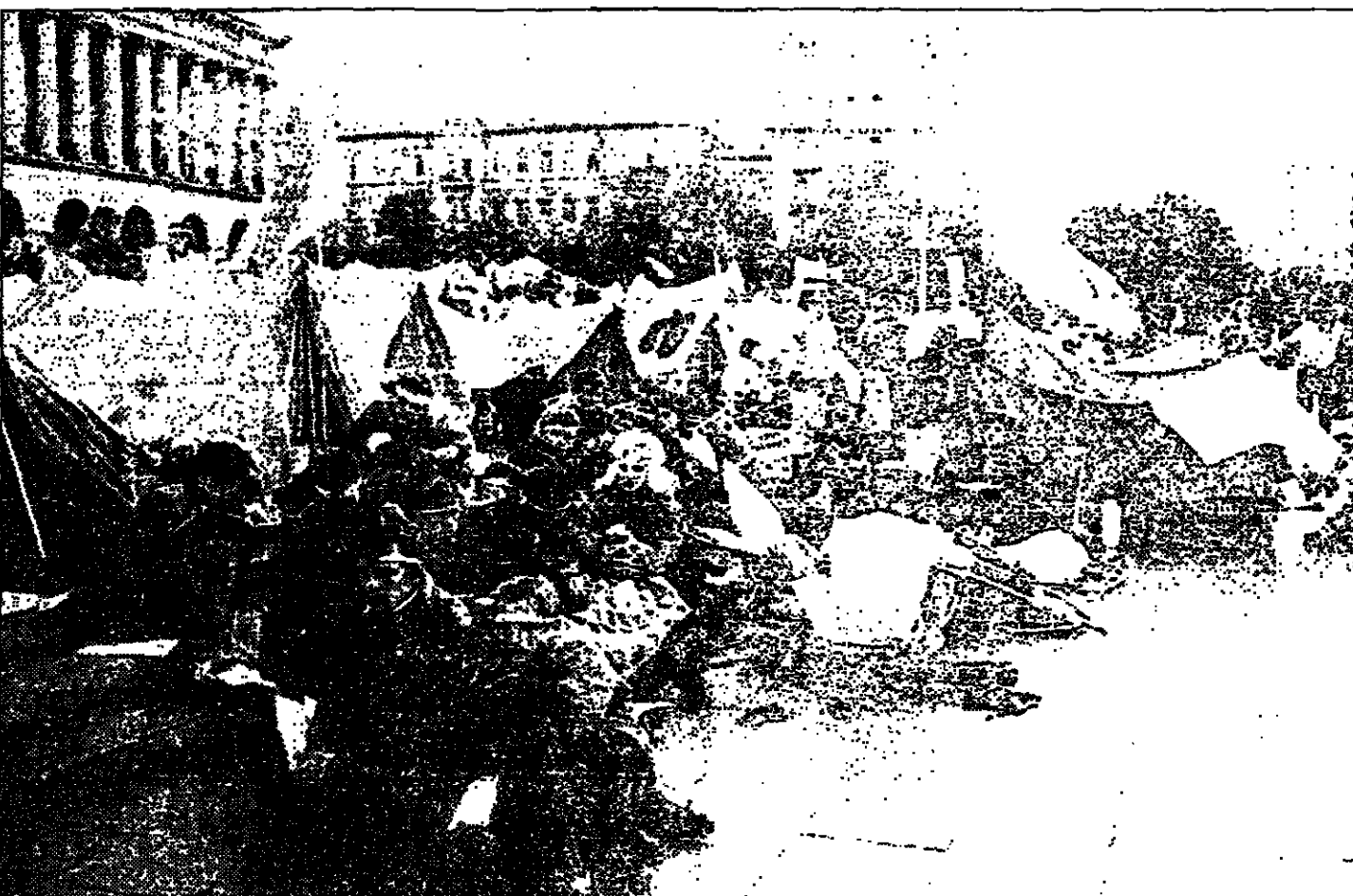
This aim was partially disguised last month when he expressed his preference for the "500-day" programme, drafted by Stanislav Shatalin, over the more conservative offering from Mr Ryzhkov.

But when Mr Shatalin claimed that Mr Gorbachev had accepted 99 per cent of his plan, he was right only so far as the number of words was concerned. He neglected to say that the 1 per cent of changes were crucial because they included reinstating the primacy of the centre over the republics on key questions, especially money.

The latest document simply spells out the implications of those changes — something Mr Yeltsin would have been quite capable of doing six weeks ago. That he has spoken out only now suggests that he has judged this the best time to seize his chance.

● Russian resignation: The co-author of the radical plan for the transition to the market economy resigned yesterday as deputy prime minister of the Russian Federation, Tass said. Grigori Yavlinsky said he was quitting because it was unrealistic to hope that Russia could carry out the plan if the central government passed Mr Gorbachev's more moderate version. (Reuters)

Leading article, page 15



Opposition camp: Ukrainian nationalists protesting at their camp outside the Kiev parliament, where dozens have been on hunger strike in protest over proposals to transfer hard-currency earnings to Moscow. They are demanding the dissolution of parliament

EC farm compromise in the balance

FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN BRUSSELS

AMID rising tempers and growing confusion, European Community farm ministers met in Luxembourg again tomorrow to seek agreement on a compromise package of agricultural subsidy cuts. But Brussels was itself locked in fierce argument yesterday over the controversial proposals, which critics say will ruin any chance of agreement with the United States in the current world trade negotiations.

A commission spokesman yesterday insisted that Ray MacSharry, the agricultural commissioner, had not given unconditional backing to the late-night compromise on Tuesday, which proposed special aid to cushion the blow to European farmers and significantly tough-

ened the EC's posture towards America.

The attempt to tone down Mr MacSharry's original 30 per cent cut in internal price subsidies deletes his offer of an 8 per cent increase in the amount of oil-seed and cereal substitutes the US can export duty-free to the EC. This sop to European farmers, worried about US encroachment in this market, will infuriate American farmers who depend on Europe for these valuable exports. Withdrawing the offer would also deprive the Community of its last bargaining card in the effort to get Washington to accept price and export subsidy cuts lower than those tabled by America in Geneva on Monday.

Tomorrow's meeting risks yet

another restatement of the same entrenched positions. Commission sources said that the whole issue might be taken over by foreign ministers meeting on Monday.

Mr MacSharry warned EC ministers on Tuesday that if they did not agree then and there to the compromise, he could not present his Brussels colleagues with a fait accompli that would persuade them to accept the modifications.

Frans Andriessen, the external trade commissioner, is leading the fight for a less protectionist Community offer in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Sources said yesterday's commission row pitting Mr Andriessen against Mr MacSharry was likely to be protracted.

The compromise, drawn up by the Italian presidency softens the commission proposal in three ways: it insists that export subsidies — the real target of US wrath — cannot be considered separately from the negotiations; it promises that sacrifices by farmers would be shared out in an "equitable" way, taking into account the particular difficulties of such members as the Mediterranean countries; and it commits the EC to a "fresh approach" to the Common Agricultural Policy — a phrase designed to win the approval of Britain.

John Gummer, the agricultural secretary, said the EC's dithering played right into the hands of America, which has already lined up considerable support in GATT for drastic cuts in farm subsidies.

Croats and Slovenes reject central rule

FROM DESSA TREVISAN IN BELGRADE

YUGOSLAVIA was pushed closer to breaking up after Slovenia's representative stormed out of a closed meeting of the Yugoslav state presidency on Tuesday. Slovenia is threatening to do so again during the federal parliament's session, while Croatia has rejected a federal plan that would reshape Yugoslavia under a strong central government.

The Slovene newspaper, *Delo*, said that the state presidency meeting had shown that constructive talks on different ideas about Yugoslavia's future were impossible as the atmosphere in the country was rising to fever pitch. It quoted Janez Drnovsek, Slovenia's representative on the state presidency, as saying that there was no willingness to discuss any other option except the one presented by Serbia and endorsed by President Jovic, himself a Serb.

President Jovic was due to present to parliament last night the draft for the future federal structure of Yugoslavia, but the session was delayed after the representatives of Slovenia and Croatia said they would boycott parliament unless the confederal option was given equal treatment. Reaffirming Croatia's position in even stronger words than hitherto, Franjo Tudjman, Cro-

atia's president, told a rally attended by several hundred thousand people in Zagreb: "There will never again be an anti-democratic power on Croatian soil, and in particular, there cannot be a greater Serbia, nor a unitarian Yugoslavia." He added that should Croatia's sovereignty be threatened, the entire nation would come to its defence and, if necessary, use force.



Return favour: Franjo Tudjman, the president of Croatia, waves to the crowd after restoring a statue of a Croat hero to Zagreb

Serb uprising leaves vital port isolated

FROM RICHARD BASSETT IN GRACAC

THE Mediterranean Express comes to an abrupt halt an hour north of Knin. Beyond the station of Gracac, in southern Croatia, the line stretches through a barren landscape of bleak rock, uninviting even in less-troubled times. This is the fault line between Croat and Serb, and although nominally Croatia extends its rule from here down to the coast of Dalmatia, the next 50 miles are a no-go area. Since last month, when the Serbs in Knin seized arms to prevent what they believed was a Croat attempt to tighten Zagreb's control over the region, rail and road traffic has dwindled to a trickle. Shots have been fired at Croatian lorries attempting to reach the coast. There are daily reports of bombs and mines along the railway line.

"You must leave the train here. We cannot guarantee your safety beyond Gracac," the ticket collector, a Croat, explained to a handful of passengers hoping to reach the coastal city of Split before nightfall. The passengers shuffled off, talking of making a detour of 350 miles through Bosnia.

Trains now rarely go beyond Gracac. Nearby, road traffic ceases after dusk, though a Serb taxi driver runs the gauntlet of roadblocks, his Belgrade number-plate acting as a talisman. At Gracac and at other stations further up the line towards Zagreb, tons of freight have been apparently abandoned in railway wagons. Destined for ships in Split and Zadar, their failure to reach the Dalmatian coast is costing Croatia businesses more than £500,000 a week. Passenger traffic has virtually ceased and at the local office of Generalisturist, the Croatian tourist agency, managers say the firm faces losses this season running into millions of pounds.

By controlling Knin, the Serbs paralyse the most important railway junction in Croatia, and attempts by the Croatian authorities to play down the conflict must ultimately fail as the economic burden cripples more and more of Zagreb's foreign-trade companies.

In Knin itself, life appears normal. Serbs say their action is designed only to protect themselves against the Zagreb government ruled by a nationalist, right-wing party under General Franjo Tudjman. As far as the Serbs are concerned, this party is "fascist" and bears a strong similarity to the nazi puppet Ustasha state, which ruled Croatia during the second world war.

Havel sacks minister of defence

Prague — President Havel of Czechoslovakia, dismissed Miroslav Vacek, his defence minister, yesterday and gave temporary control of the armed forces to Marian Calfa, the prime minister (Peter Green writes).

A presidential spokeswoman refused to comment on the reasons, but General Vacek, who had been army chief of staff and a Communist Party member under the previous regime, had been blamed for recent army attempts to cover up plans to suppress last November's "Velvet Revolution" by delaying the release of documents to a presidential commission of enquiry.

General Vacek has also been criticized for his slowness in implementing army command reforms.

Mosque meeting

Delhi — The Indian government has called multi-party talks to discuss the Hindu-Muslim dispute over an ancient religious site in the northern city of Ayodhya. The government coalition's principal partner, the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party, said it would withdraw and bring down the administration rather than give up plans to dismantle an ancient mosque in the city.

Convoy escort

Madrid — The Spanish interior ministry has assigned more than 1,000 Civil Guards to escort 400 foreign lorries, held up at the French border by striking Spanish lorry drivers. Fresh fish and produce have disappeared from supermarket shelves in several cities and factories are closing for lack of parts and raw materials.

Convent replaced

Building work has begun on a new convent to replace the controversial Carmelite convent on the site of the Auschwitz camp in Poland. According to a letter from Cardinal Josef Glimp, Primate of Poland, to Sir Sigmund Sternberg, a leader of the Jewish community in Britain, two storeys should be complete by winter.

Abduction claim

Stockholm — A Kenyan exiles group in Sweden has accused President Moi and an unnamed second country, of abducting and repatriating from Norway, Koigi wa Wamwere, the leader of the clandestine Kenya Patriotic Front. He was arrested near Nairobi. He was, according to the Kenya government, crossed illegally from Uganda to plot armed insurrection. (Reuters)

Crime syndicates tighten grip on Italy

FROM PAUL BOMPARD IN ROME

THE Mafia, the Camorra and the 'Ndrangheta are increasing their hold over southern Italy, gaining political control and economic influence over entire areas, according to a report by Italy's intelligence services.

The report was presented by Giulio Andreotti, the prime minister, only hours after the resignation on Tuesday of Antonio Gava, the interior minister, and as the government announced new measures to try to combat the spreading plague of organised crime.

While the greatest alarm is caused by the growing political

and economic weight of criminal organisations, the crime rate is also rising sharply. In the first six months of 1990, in the southern regions of Sicily, Calabria and Campania, there were 774 murders compared with fewer than 700 in the same period last year. Armed robberies also increased by about 20 per cent to 5,435 over the same period. In 1989, there were more than two million crimes reported all over Italy, compared with 740,000 in 1980.

According to the report, the Sicilian Mafia has 180 "families", with 4,000 members. In Calabria, the 'Ndrangheta has 140 cosche, or gangs, with about 5,000 members.

In Campania, the region around Naples, the Camorra is divided between the older and more powerful "clans", specialising in international drug trafficking, and a host of minor "clans" which operate on a local basis all over southern Italy — a total of more than 100 clans and 6,000 people.

There are thus 15,000 full-time operatives of three inter-linked organisations with, according to Signor Andreotti, connections with international crime and drug trafficking syndicates and sophisticated money recycling operations through finance houses and property firms in Milan.

Signor Andreotti said that on

their home ground the organisations "influence the administration of the state and local institutions through murder, intimidation, and an occult guidance of the voters". President Cossiga declared recently that "entire areas of the national territory are beyond the control of the state".

New measures announced by the government include stiffer sentences without parole, closer control of the allocation of public contracts, and tighter weapons laws. Many Italians fear, however, that organised crime is now a part of the nation's economic and political reality.

France to restructure nuclear defence capability

FROM PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

BEHIND a barrage of leaks to the press, the French government is preparing a comprehensive defence review that will end three decades of reliance on the present mix of its nuclear "dissuasion forces". Before the end of this week, President Mitterrand is expected to announce details of France's response to the new strategic challenges of the 1990s and beyond, possibly involving a decision to downgrade, or even abandon, further development of the nation's ground-to-ground nuclear missile capability.

According to observers here, M Mitterrand, as head of state, may opt to retain only the airborne- and submarine-launched missile components of the independent deterrent. A few days ago, Michel Rocard, the prime minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the defence minister, and the military high command were summoned to the Elysee for a briefing on what had been decided.

A subsequent, evidently well-informed, report in the financial daily *Les Echos*, said defence insiders considered the French nuclear submarine force, five-strong with another under construction, as "the heart of our system of dissuasion". There could, therefore, be no question of sacrificing any aspect of that programme in the name of a "peace dividend": defence ministry projections envisage the submarines remaining pivotal for another 30 years.

Intriguingly, there is general agreement here that the British government could play a key role in the decision whether to reduce the ground-based or airborne nuclear arsenal. Advocates of increased spending on a new air-delivered weapon for use with France's advanced Rafale fighter say that approval from Margaret Thatcher for joint development of the proposed longer-range missile (a decision is expected before the end of the year) would provide a significant financial incentive for going ahead.

By some accounts, the French would look to London to chip in with Fr 5 billion (£500 million) for the project, which could provide the British nuclear strike force of Tornado aircraft with its required new missile. It is acknowledged, however, that a competing programme put forward by America represents a threat to French hopes.

The fate of France's ground-to-ground nuclear force, 18 S3 missiles in silos on the Albion plateau in southern France, will be sealed if, as some observers anticipate, M Mitterrand opts to drop a Fr 30 billion modernisation programme. That would mean in effect maintaining Albion until the S3s become obsolete at the end of the century, leaving the field to the submarine-airborne systems.

M Mitterrand hopes that unveiling this programme will end discontent from the military establishment, where complaints about "paralysis" in defence thinking are freely expressed. It is not just a question of adjusting budgets or juggling arms projects, critics argue: France must decide now what tasks the armed forces should perform.

That objective has not been helped by the infighting among the different service chiefs about where the spending axe should fall. Nor does continuing uncertainty over the future of M Chevènement — whose evident lack of enthusiasm for the main thrust of French policy in the Gulf has complicated all defence decisions — make a smooth transition easy.

As it is, the Gulf confrontation has focused attention on France's ability to throw conventional forces swiftly into a hotbed far beyond the old "European theatre". The simultaneous use of *les paras* to hold the ring in Rwanda merely underlines the case for increased strategic flexibility.

Among the top brass in every service, there is a feeling that the debate, which officially concerns defence planning for 1992-96, comes at a moment when they are vulnerable to pressure for big spending cuts. The transformation of the geopolitical background against which the French military establishment must fight, against all the other national priorities, has sharpened the belief that it is crucial to get it right this time.

Democrats misdirected

Anatole Kaletsky

As the American economy moves into recession, banks teeter on the brink of failure and another government shutdown looms, the world's most powerful nation may appear to be sliding towards political and economic disaster. The truth is less alarming but more complex. America does face a crisis: not of constitutional or economic disintegration, but of ideology.

The fundamental reason President Bush cannot agree a budget with Congress is that struggle between left and right has unexpectedly returned to American politics. For the first time in a decade or more, politicians are asking a taboo question: should the costs of government fall more on the rich or on the poor?

After the long period of false innocence and market-researched consensus that followed the Democrats' crushing defeats in three successive presidential elections, the breaking of the taboo on economic ideology is playing havoc with the rules of the game.

The Democrats' decisive lurch towards ideological warfare came on Tuesday night, when the House of Representatives passed a budget plan built around higher income taxes — an increase from 28 to 33 per cent in the marginal rate on incomes above \$186,000 a year, and a further 10 per cent surcharge on incomes above \$1 million. The ideological import of this was reinforced by Dan Rostenkowski, chairman of the House tax-writing committee, who was one of the Reagan administration's most powerful collaborators within the Democratic party. "People should be taxed according to their ability to pay," he said on Tuesday.

Simply stated, that means that high-income people should pay more than low-income people. The panic sown in the White House by this frontal attack on 1980s ideology was illustrated by President Bush's reaction. As public opinion polls revealed that 87 per cent of Americans on incomes below \$30,000 a year disapprove of current economic policies, he answered the call for higher taxes on millionaires with an insurance worthy of Marie Antoinette: "If this budget bill reaches my desk, I will veto it because it raises the income taxes of the working men and women of this country."

But though Mr Bush's initial response to this attack from the left was misjudged, his position is not necessarily weak or even weakly unsound. Politically, he still has American history, as well as powerful lobbying forces, on his side in the battle against egalitarian taxation. Economically, there are many good arguments against raising income tax rates in America which have hardly been heard in the misleading and casualistic debates of the 1980s about "supply side economics".

The first such argument is that

incomes in many parts of America are already quite highly taxed by international standards. The present top marginal rate of 31 per cent appears low, but this takes no account of state and local taxes. For residents of New York City, for instance, the top marginal income tax rate is almost 45 per cent, which is higher than the rates in many European countries.

Americans often forget that their tax system is more comprehensive than most other countries. Despite the complexity of the tax code, there are probably fewer loopholes and exemptions than, for example, in Britain. The main exception to this is the availability of unlimited deductions for mortgage interest. For the Democrats to attack interest deductions on million-dollar mortgages would be much better than pressing for straight increases in taxes on income — and the party's leadership in the Senate seems to have grasped this, which may facilitate a compromise with the White House.

The third and most important objection to the American left's newfound preoccupation with income taxes is that it distracts them from the real fiscal issue at the heart of the country's social problems. What is unusual about America's fiscal structure compared with that elsewhere is not the low level of income and corporate taxes, but the negligible level of taxes on consumption. In most European countries, consumption taxes such as VAT and petrol duty account for 50 per cent or more of government budgets. In America, indirect taxes contribute only about 10 per cent.

Economists almost unanimously consider consumption taxes preferable to taxes on income, because they have less effect on incentives. But politically, consumption taxes have an even more important advantage. Unlike income tax, which arouses resentment with every pay cheque, indirect taxes become almost invisible after an initial outcry. As a result, governments in other industrialised countries collect on average one-third more revenue than America in relation to gross national product, yet suffer less resistance from taxpayers.

At present, the Democrats resist virtually all consumption taxes with a burning ferocity, on the grounds that they are less progressive than income tax. What they should realise, however, is that the social impact of a fiscal system should be judged as a whole, and not by individual taxes. If higher consumption taxes were to save off cuts in social spending and ultimately enable America to reach consensus in favour of a welfare safety net for its poorest citizens, the overall effect would be highly progressive.

If the American left really wants a fairer society, rather than merely to score debating points, this is how it should proceed.

...and moreover

CLEMENT FREUD

The invitation to a special screening of *The Green Man*, starring Albert Finney, has had pride of place on one hall table for some weeks now. "At the Princess Anne Theatre, British Academy of Film and Television Arts, Piccadilly, Tuesday, October 16th at 7pm prompt," it states, and people who came to the flat — the Portuguese Maria who washes and irons, our window cleaner and occasional messengers bearing parcels — were impressed. You can tell.

As an observer of the Hollywood scene and sometime subscriber to *Secrets of the Stars* and *Screen Idols*, I know quite a bit about special screenings. They begin with a stretch limousine taking the artiste to Grauman's Chinese Theatre, where there is a patch of soft cement in which to leave the impression of one's foot, then a saunter along the red carpet beneath the canopy past the gaping, cheering crowd that strains against a wall of good-humoured policemen and into the foyer with its banks of lights and rows of photographers; here the carpet is deeper, and high-heeled container-loads of minicasecaded womanhood parade under gallons of mascara topped by acres of bouffant hair.

A smile to Myrna Loy, an inclination of the head towards C. Aubrey Smith, oh look, there's Brando again. Next come the posse of journalists with their questions: No, one repeats, we are just good friends; yes, I certainly hope that the great public out there will love the film.

There is something seriously engaging about the movie business in general and first nights in particular, appearing in a production accorded such ritual is quite especially wonderful and yes, I play — as we say in the industry — opposite Finney, though my name is given an inferior position in the credits; this could be to do with the fact that he precedes me in strict alphabetical order.

On Tuesday old Lady F said she would come with me, will it be smart? I told her to take off the sweatshirt I had given her for our ruby wedding outing, the one with a Wife Is Not Just For Christmas printed on the

back, and to put on her finery. The producers of *The Green Man* did not send a limo, so we drove, left Wimpole Street at 6.15pm, which was wise, for much traffic was moving towards Piccadilly. Special screenings of three 50-minute episodes with Finney and me are, well, special.

I have to admit to an initial disappointment: although the theatre is in her name, the Princess Royal was not present, nor was Mr Albert Finney, nor what you would call much of an audience, nor fans; and we were the only ones who had dressed up for the occasion.

The Green Man — to be shown on BBC TV later this year — starts irrelevantly with a gruesome scene in a forest, which turns out to be a dream from which Mr Finney wakes in a cold sweat. He then takes a bath, drinks some whisky, has an abortive attempt at empathising with his 14-year-old daughter and chats to his elderly and infirm father, who calls him "a bad lad".

"This is mere foreplay, get on with it," I murmur to my wife. Finally Finney, who portrays an idiosyncratic, lecherous, alcoholic innkeeper, goes to his dressing-room to prepare for our scene: he drinks more whisky, glances at his dress shirt, selects a bow tie, brushes his hair, dons a dinner jacket, inspects the kitchen, ogles a woman guest, meets his doctor, caresses the doctor's wife and then — you could hear the audience catch its breath, as when Sinatra begins to sing "My Way" — the door opens and Bernard Levin and I enter the hostelry, shake Finney by the hand and disappear.

Not a lot happens after that, though we sat through another two hours and 25 minutes of assorted scenes: nothing you would not encounter in an average East Anglian hotel with the possible exception of the many naked women, three ghosts, the gay vicar and the exhumation of a skeleton that looked in good nick considering how long it had lain beneath the soil... but I have said enough. I do not wish to give away the plot, such as it is, after Levin and I had set it all up.

Don't all rush to follow Goldsmith

Is capitalism compatible with greenery? When the ecology movement was born 20 years ago, its disciples answered "no." The rallying cry of the Club of Rome was zero growth. Since then, the debate has become more complex. Cleaning up pollution is expensive, so wealth must be generated to pay for it. It is the advanced economies that care and spend most on maintaining the environment. Capitalist companies have become more and more concerned to clean up their act, if only for reasons of long-term self-interest. Moreover, the worst environmental degradation was to be found in the non-capitalist economies of Eastern Europe.

The fundamentalist arguments, however, are bound to be re-awakened by the dramatic decision of Sir James Goldsmith, capitalist entrepreneur *par excellence*, to forsake the world of commerce for a life as a benevolent green. Influenced by his brother Teddy, who started *The Ecologist* magazine in 1970, Goldsmith is deserting the world of the deal for a new purity.

The natural reaction, as with all prophets, is to write this off as an act of mild dottiness. But he is not alone. At least three other big businessmen and three former pop stars turned entrepreneur



Big names behind greenery: Bradman, McCartney, Goldsmith

have signposted the way. Godfrey Bradman, chairman of the Rosehaugh property company, Lord McAlpine, the construction magnate, and Sir Peter Parker, former chairman of British Rail, have all campaigned on green issues.

Adam Faith, the former singer and actor, is co-ordinating a project to save the black rhino in Tanzania. Paul McCartney and Sting are also converts to the green crusade. Their dedication is perhaps less total than Goldsmith's is shaping up to be, but a sufficient explanation. Taken together, their careers have shown all to be astute, and (where necessary) ruthless. They are not creatures of whim.

Of course, there is nothing new in the marriage of capitalism and

philanthropy. The Victorians were familiar with it. The "chocolate philanthropists", the Cadburys and the Rowntrees, were hugely influential in their time. Many good and progressive causes, including green ones, benefit even today from the support of the Rowntree Trusts. Mrs Thatcher's government has often cited their work as an exemplar of a way forward that alleviates the claims on an overburdened state. With the store of optimism on which the successful capitalist depends runs down. The day to meet one's maker approaches. The worldly pleasures that wealth brings begin to pall. This can give rise to Ozymandian tendencies, and Sir James's huge environmental reserve in Mexico, devoted to organic farming and the collection

round to believing that saving the rainforest and stopping global warming is more important than making more money; and his considerable fortune will make him a powerful actor on the scene.

The motivation, of course, may be as much psychological as intellectual. Within many entrepreneurial hearts, a tension exists between the frenetic day-to-day activity and a yearning to create and build something that will last. The store of optimism on which the successful capitalist depends runs down. The day to meet one's maker approaches. The worldly pleasures that wealth brings begin to pall. This can give rise to Ozymandian tendencies, and Sir James's huge environmental reserve in Mexico, devoted to organic farming and the collection

of rare animals, can be regarded as an attempt to leave a monument that time will not wither.

To understand all is to forgive all, and only a sour spirit will fail to respond, at any rate in part, to Goldsmith's endeavour. Other rich, and lesser, men retire to much more damaging activities. In the scale of virtue, saving rainforests beats driving powerboats or swilling champagne with models in an effort to recapture one's vanished youth. The money is his, made fairly according to the rules of the game. If he chooses to spend it in this way, why not?

At the same time, it is to be hoped that Goldsmith's career reorientation will not be followed by all of his ilk. The arguments that once defeated the zero growth merchants retain their force.

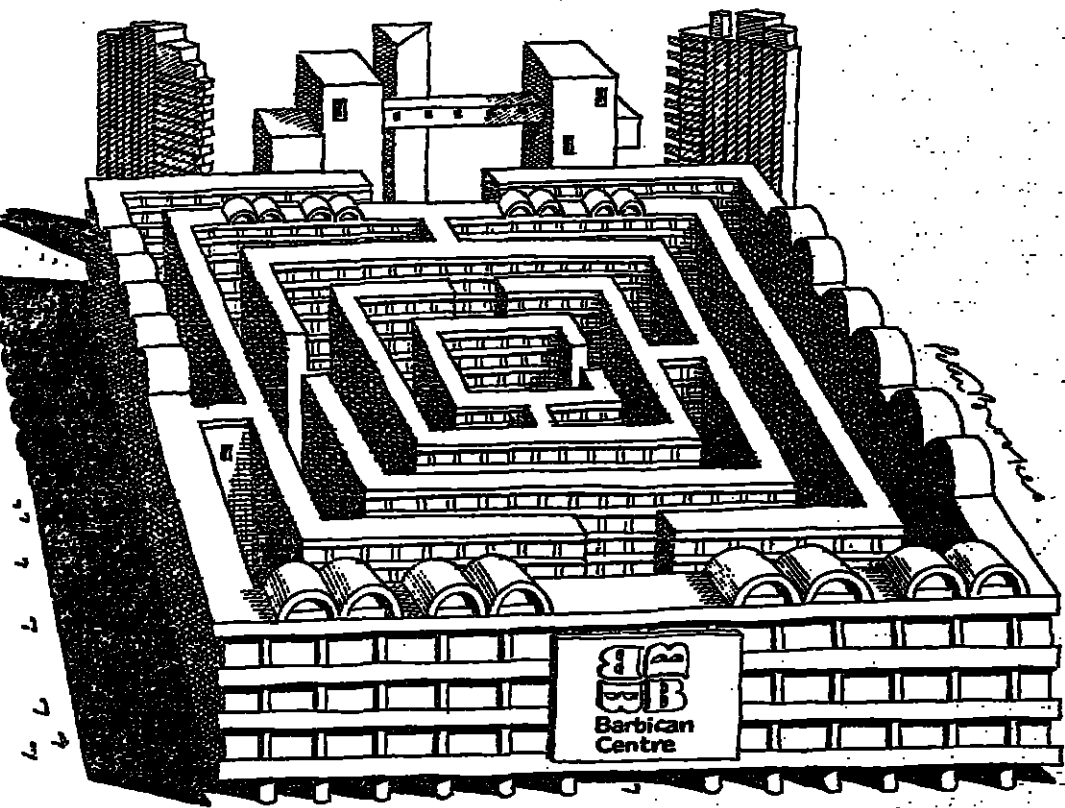
The successes of Britain in the Eighties and the future successes of Eastern Europe in the Nineties, depend on the cultivation of the entrepreneurial spirit. If the entire world retreats into the laager as Goldsmith is doing, then poverty, unemployment, a degradation of social services and, yes, ultimately of the environment, will be the inevitable result.

Not everyone has the best part of a billion pounds to cushion a new-found unworldliness.

David Lipsey

There's no point in knocking: just bring the house down

Bernard Levin believes plans to make the Barbican more accessible should be scrapped and a fresh start ordered



Many years ago Sir Thomas Beecham was conducting an orchestral rehearsal in the Albert Hall when a gang of builders, engaged to do some substantial repairs to the fabric of another part of the hall, and knowing nothing of what was going on in the auditorium, opened up with a chorus of pneumatic drills. As the music petered out in the face of such competition, the maestro put down his baton and said: "Thank God, gentlemen, they are pulling the bloody place down at last."

They were not and in time we all grew to love the monstrous thing, particularly when the Festival Hall was built and we no longer had to go there except for the Proms. But no one has come to love the Barbican Centre, and no one ever will or could, and my heart leapt in joy the other day when a too-hastily read headline suggested that they were pulling that bloody place down at last.

They are not, alas; they are only commissioning a study of this monstrous off-white elephant with the intention — quite hopeless, of course — of redesigning the interior to ensure that customers can find the part of the building they are looking for in less than three-quarters of an hour. I, who have a lack of a sense of direction so extreme that I have difficulty in telling my right hand from my left, have to be taken by the arm and put firmly in my seat, but even stronger men who have traversed the Gobi desert blindfold can be seen weeping with frustration and rage, as they go up stairs and lifts that deposit a theatre-goer at the library and a concert-seeker at the restaurant.

I should have known. On the night the Queen ceremoniously opened the building, I was, and by no means alone, attending to my needs in the gentlemen's lavatory, when Lady Antonia was ushered in by a disorientated and flustered guide. As you would expect of one so self-possessed, she rose handsomely to the occasion: without fainting or even (as far as I could see) blushing, she made an unhurried exit, and we all finished what we were doing and straightened our black ties, not least, perhaps, because we had been sharply reminded of the

ancient rubric, "Please adjust dress before leaving."

The Barbican should sell compasses, and no doubt the survey will advise it to do so. But no amount of tinkering will make this gruesome labyrinth user-friendly.

And within the general tragedy, there is a more specific one. The interiors of both the principal auditoriums — the concert-hall and the theatre — are admirable; the sweep of the seating is attractive, the steps are well-measured, the sight-lines excellent, the rows spaced so generously that nobody has to stand up to let others get to their places (do you hear that, Bayreuth?) and the seats comfortable and handsomely upholstered.

Alas, would that the auditoriums were the whole of the building, for they are surrounded by a grim mediocrity that lowers the high spirits the halls induce. For even if you stay in your seat in the interval and why should you be obliged

to? you cannot avoid having to pass through the shoddy mess that is the rest of the building, and pass through it at least twice, moreover, coming and going.

It isn't as though the building is physically hopeless but loved by the performers (such as my dear Wigmore, which is loved by performers and audiences alike, though the frieze at the back of the platform can give you night-mares), the Royal Shakespeare Company unanimously regards the Barbican with a fierce and abiding loathing, and has done so since the doors opened.

The whole place is owned by the City of London, and no one who takes a stroll among the City's most prominent buildings will be surprised at the quality of the Barbican; indeed, the Barbican is much superior to the fruits of the cowardice and laziness that marked the first two post-war architectural generations of the

Square Mile (we are only now seeing creations worthy of the space, such as the Lloyds building), and that make an all too fitting approach to the dismal failure of what should have been a beacon of hope, pleasure and cultural enrichment.

The very doorstep signals the disaster within: newcomers are certain they must have come to the wrong place, for nobody, surely, would seek the entrance of a place of entertainment in a disused coal-mine. Once assured, however, that there is no mistake, they step inside and are faced with a crazy system of "Levels". You and I, not being as clever as the people who devised the system, would think that visitors would at once, logically, go to the ground floor, and thence make their way to whichever floor held what they were looking for. Not so; the crazy paving of which the place is made precludes so sensible an approach.

for it is practically impossible to know which level you are on, such is the way it is planned.

The bewildered visitor therefore looks about to find directions. They are there: to be sure, but they are not only singularly unhelpful, but are made in the limpest and most unattractive lettering imaginable; whoever designed them must have been thinking that the commission was for a very cheap regional airport. As for the decorative devices that are supposed to make the place a thing of beauty, or if not of beauty at least of excitement, Woolworths in its worst days would never have stooped so low or ugly.

And so we come, ten years late, to the realisation that Something Must Be Done. The brief for the examiners is "to help people to find their way out of and around the centre, and to locate its key facilities, including the box office, shops and catering." (Shops? Shops? I have been to the Barbican at least 200 times, and the only shop I have ever seen there is the little kiosk that sells play-texts, T-shirts, decorated mugs and the like. Is there, somewhere in its hideous bowels, an arcade of shops that have been concealed from me all this time?)

It won't work. The study will be made, recommendations will be accepted and even acted upon, signposts will be strewn throughout the building — why, it is not entirely impossible that an audibly intelligible public address system will be installed. But nothing will be done, because nothing can be done, to lift the pall of disappointment that the Barbican offers the moment the threshold is crossed. And when you think of some of the marvellous performances that have been given in the theatre and the concert-hall, the fact that visitors do not feel excitement, happiness and stimulation, but the pall aforesaid, is the most damning evidence that a great mistake was made at the beginning, and however much tinkering is done, cannot be rectified.

My advice is to abandon the study and the tinkering alike, carefully preserve the auditoriums, pull the rest of the building down, throw it into the Thames and start again. The Thames will complain, but I can't help that.

Gordievsky's Kremlin ally

One of President Gorbachev's top advisers has told Western human rights campaigners that he is involved in "a tug of war" with the Soviet old guard over his efforts to secure exit visas for the family of KGB defector Oleg Gordievsky, whose story has been serialised in the *Times* this week.

Gordievsky, who now lives in London, has been separated from his wife, Lella, and daughters Marina, ten, and Anyuta, nine, since he fled from Moscow, fearing for his life, five years ago.

Earlier this month, Lord Bethell, former chairman of the European Parliament's human rights sub-committee, wrote to Yevgeny Burlatsky, chairman of the Supreme Soviet's equivalent body, about the Soviet authorities' refusal to allow the family to leave. Burlatsky, a former speech-writer to Khrushchev, was close to Gorbachev, visited Brussels this week and told MEPs he would do everything in his quite considerable power to help to reunite the family. "This is a tug-of-war between human rights bodies as my own against the KGB and the ministry of internal affairs," he said.

Burlatsky also hopes to persuade the Soviet government to review the espionage laws and abolish the death penalty for spying. "With the increasing openness of Soviet society," says Bethell, "he thinks there is only one desirable thing left for Westerners to steal — beautiful Russian girls."

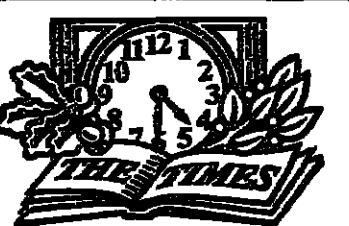
Foreign Office career diplomats could not resist smirking at the disclaimer of Douglas Hurd's chief press officer in the *Middle East*, Brian Mower, who failed to prevent the leaking of Hurd's alleged remarks about the Palestinian homeland. In Foreign Office eyes, Mower's background at the Treasury and then with Hurd at the Home Office prevents him from ever being "one of us".

Taking the bait

Only a month after Sydney Opera House gave her a glorious retirement send-off, Joan Sutherland is contemplating a sentimental comeback. The Australian-born singer is understood to be considering



one more "final" appearance — in little more than a walk-on role — at Covent Garden in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* on New Year's Eve. The production will be conducted by her husband, Richard Bonynge, and families should



DIARY

Of course try to see the New Year in together.

Rumour has it that Bonynge is thinking about his wife's encore already. "I could have danced all night" from *My Fair Lady* is the current favourite.

"It is a Viennese tradition to have a surprise guest in Prince Orlovsky's party scene on New Year's Eve," says a spokesman. "We are talking to Dame Joan, but we are unlikely to be able to announce anything until the last minute. After all, a surprise is meant to be just that."

Waspish

Talking to Booker Prize winner A.S. Byatt can be a dangerous pastime. Before you know it, there you are in her next novel, as well-known journalists whose names litter the pages of *Possession* have discovered. Among them is Nicholas Wapshott, political editor of *The Observer*, who lent his name to Mrs Wapshott, one of the least sympathetic characters in the novel. "We had a huge argument about 15 years ago and then didn't

speak to each other," says Byatt. "We were reintroduced at a party earlier this year and discovered that our argument had all been based on a misunderstanding, that we actually agreed."

And how was Byatt celebrating her award yesterday? "A taxi is waiting outside to take me to bank the cheque," she told the *Diary*. "Then I am off to University College to talk with my French theorist friends. I need soothing."

Tell him: resign later

Only the swift intervention of the Tory chief whip, Tim Renton, prevented a second parliamentary private secretary resigning on the day that John Major's PPS, Tony Favell, quit the ranks. When government whips heard that David Sumner, PPS for almost five years to the attorney general, Sir Patrick Mayhew, was about to resign on Tuesday, he was swiftly summoned to Renton's office and asked to think again. However, he is still expected to resign before the next election, to give himself more time to defend his marginal seat.

Favell's colleagues, meanwhile, are highly amused by the untimely appearance of an interview with him this week in *The House Magazine*. "I must be the longest serving PPS here and we get on very well together," says Favell of the man whose employment he was about to quit. He claims he and Major are "very relaxed" together, and says he knows what would embarrass the Chancellor. "If it is something which might embarrass him, I always ask first." Such as whether to resign at such a sensitive time?

Doubling up

Russell Eurocart Frederick Sorensen, head of the EC's air transport section, has appealed to airlines to impose a reservation charge to discourage businessmen and other travellers from making multiple bookings which they fail to honour or cancel. The practice, Sorensen believes, is directly responsible for the over-selling, by which bookings are taken for up to 20 per cent more seats than are available.

"The business-class ticket system allows passengers to retain the full value of the ticket, even if the passenger doesn't show," he says. "It should be changed."

Anyone who has been bounced off a flight for which they have a valid ticket will doubtless agree. A shame, then, that Sorensen, who is now charged with drawing up EC proposals to outlaw the practice, does not appear to be leading by example. For a visit to London last month, Sorensen's office reserved him a seat on a Sabena flight from Brussels, but he flew instead with British Airways, without cancelling his other reservation. "There is nothing in the current airline booking system that prevents this," he says. "It is common practice." Hardly the point, surely.

● The thought of performing the musical *Kismet*, which kicks off with a number called "Beautiful Baghdad" proved too much for the Crewe Amateur Operatic Society at such a sensitive time. It has cancelled its forthcoming production. A pity, perhaps, given that the villain is a Saddam-like figure who ends up drowned in his own ornamental pool.



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LEARNING FROM HISTORY

Margaret Thatcher is playing a dangerous game on education. After yesterday's much-publicised meeting with her education secretary, John MacGregor, she should express confidence in him and leave him quietly to bed down her already vast reform programme. There is much scope for Tory radicalism elsewhere. Here is a case for consolidation.

The cause of the latest rumpus is Mrs Thatcher's teasing reference last week to vouchers, beloved of the party's right wing. Vouchers for primary and secondary education are seen as the logical last step in the decentralisation of state education. Schools would "go independent" (but under Whitehall supervision by hook or by crook), with a voucher for parents to take to whatever school they chose. This voucher could vary with income or geography and meet all or only part of the cost of schooling. Since it would have to include the 7 per cent of children in private schools, the system would inevitably cost more.

Ever since the 1960s, with the advent of "progressive" primary education and the steady demise of selective secondary schools, British state education has found itself on the defensive. Apparently falling standards, coupled with rising prosperity, have driven many parents into the private sector. The present government has sought to meet this dissatisfaction by helping parents to opt out. It has established a tier of state-supported schooling partly or totally free of local council control, by means of assisted places at private schools, grant-maintained status for "opted-out" schools and "local management with open enrolment" even within the local council sector. Whatever political cosmetic surrounds these devices, the intention is to offer an escape from a uniform, comprehensive system for the middle class or clever child.

Common sense suggests that, up to a point, the injection of some such competition into part of any public service will probably improve the whole. The same ambition governs Mrs Thatcher's hopes for hospitals. The lack of such competition, coupled with the politicisation of staffing, underlay the demoralisation of much city education in the 1980s. Head teachers' freedom to spend within their budgets, greater flexibility for popular schools to bid for extra resources, the occasional opted-out rival to set an academic pace, have all brought fresh air into a

moribund local structure. Mr MacGregor claims that such reforms have many of the virtues of vouchers without the risk, complication and cost of a free-for-all.

But how much further should such competition go? Education is not just another marketplace service industry and ministers will commit electoral suicide if they suppose otherwise. Public education is a central civic function, its structure a mirror of the community round it. Mrs Thatcher's enthusiasm for vouchers is built, not just on her admirable love of choice, but on her aversion to local government. A new school system which enticed, say, over a third of parents in the more prosperous districts out of council schools and into quasi-independent ones would create social and educational apartheid. While the remaining council "sink" schools could be given extra money — though for how long? — there would be discontinuity and waste as parents chased teachers and fashions from one school to another. As the education director for Hammersmith and Fulham says in a letter today, this is threatened even now.

The state-maintained schools would suffer a different but no less inhibiting fate, drawn into the embrace of Whitehall. This government has shown its love of educational centralism in its curricular dirigisme. Mrs Thatcher has rightly berated her education ministers for this, but she goaded them into it. The belief that a centrally financed national school system would somehow be more independent, say in staffing or building, than one financed locally is a fantasy: look what Whitehall has done with the prisons and hospitals.

Throughout most of the democratic world, the best state schools are local schools, locally financed, locally supported, locally patronised. The government is right to permit an independent sector to keep the public sector on its toes, though why it should subsidise that sector is a mystery. But the crucial task of government is to promote, within the local authority sector, a sensible balance between efficient school management and the fair allocation of resources. It is no good pretending, as some Tories still do, that all parents can always have the state school of their choice, and making this a code for "all middle-class parents" is a dangerous deceit. In 1964, the Tories were tarred as the party of educational segregation and were thrown out of office.

LET THEM SELL CAKE

The Soviet Union can no longer afford socialism, but capitalism clearly costs too much. That is the core of President Mikhail Gorbachev's economic plan, published on Tuesday and instantly denounced by his rival, Boris Yeltsin. The president is trying to please both the party and the republics, by introducing the free market without abolishing the apparatus of central planning. His decision will not end an intellectual and political argument which has lasted too long.

The Soviet Union has been here before. Lenin tried to compromise between socialism and the market in his New Economic Policy. His premature death left the field open to Stalin's own cure for the country's ills, which appealed to those in the West who emphasised "modernisation" above all else.

Mr Gorbachev has calculated that, by leaving the machinery of control intact, he can neutralise what would otherwise constitute a formidable faction of disgruntled hereditary bureaucrats. Thus the prime minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, and his cronies are now ludicrously charged with ensuring the success of a programme against which they have fought a long public war of attrition.

Mr Gorbachev's own position, at the apex of the Soviet *nomenklatura*, may not yet be strong enough to dispense with the political buttressing of the Moscow ministries. Though the Ukrainian premier was forced by popular protests to resign yesterday — shades of Poland and East Germany last year — Mr Gorbachev himself is not about to relinquish the field. But the Soviet president has not been persuaded of his own indispensability merely by the flattery of prime ministers or academics. He believes that if the Soviet state is to survive the coming winter, there must be one source of economic authority, able to override the republics. President Gorbachev hopes to appear as a *de Gaulle*, silencing the parliamentary cacophony. Aware that they might be walking into a trap, Mr Yeltsin and the Russian democrats appear

to have decided to defer unilateral action and watch the Soviet juggernaut seize up in the arctic twilight of communism. The legal status of private property will not be enshrined above a state which has always had confiscatory tendencies. The reservoir of paper roubles will not be drained. Privatisation will apparently follow neither the western models for selling state assets, already adopted in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, nor the alternative strategy of free distribution.

Nor has the Soviet government any plans to nurture the new commercial class which even the most rudimentary market economy needs, on which the rule of law and democratic institutions depend. That class, though small and vulnerable, was palpably present in central Europe long before 1989. In the Soviet Union it is only just emerging.

Mr Gorbachev and the Soviet state will, it seems, be left to incur the wrath of the people. A record grain harvest last summer, despite colossal waste, means that nobody (in the cities, at least) is likely to starve this winter. On the other hand, the retreat from central Europe, the weakening of the military-industrial nexus, and above all the presence of Mr Yeltsin, could combine to precipitate a political collapse. Economic decrepitude cannot of itself bring down an established power structure — however extreme Ceausescu's impoverishment of Romania, there had to be a coup to bring him down — but it has already provided Mr Gorbachev's democratic opponents with the propaganda weapons they need.

Mr Gorbachev has always triumphed by extemporisation, never by the cogency or candour of his policies. His decision to eschew consistency in economics is quite in character. It is also a calamity for the Russian people. Unless their patience is unlimited, it looks as though Mr Gorbachev may for once have miscalculated. His plan does not deserve western financial support.

THE HURD MENTALITY

Dogged though his visit to Israel has been by accidents and gaffes, Douglas Hurd cannot entirely blame the black farce on the relentless operation of Murphy's law. The truly avoidable error was the trip itself.

Since Iraq invaded Kuwait, Mr Hurd has made the most of the somewhat mysterious esteem in which Britain continues to be held by Arab governments. His visits to the Gulf states and Egypt have helped to strengthen the anti-Iraq coalition. His decision last month to include Israel in these peregrinations was a reckless concession to the Foreign Office's claim to a "role" in the Palestine dispute.

With or without the killings in Jerusalem, which took place after the visit had been fixed, no worse time could have been chosen. Visits by a British foreign secretary are as rare as they have been dogged by misfortune: Lord Carrington was there when Argentina invaded the Falklands in 1982. Even if Britain had influence in Israel, the visit could only give prominence to the Arab-Israeli conflict just when any linkage with the Kuwait invasion was least desirable. Since Britain has almost no influence, what compensating benefit could Mr Hurd have hoped to derive?

The damage began even before he departed, with a speech that blurred the clarity of Britain's policy on the Gulf by criticising Israel's "misguided" policies in the occupied territories, urging it to seize the chance for a settlement which, he believed, would be created by Iraq's defeat and pouring sympathy on the Palestinians. Mr Hurd is too experienced to have expected his denial that this constituted "linkage" to be taken seriously.

The first warning followed: the Israeli government advised the cancellation, on "security" grounds, of his plans to open a British Council centre in the Gaza Strip. Nothing daunted, Mr Hurd set off, buoyed by the prospect of a lunch with Palestinian leaders and promising to talk tough to the Israelis who, he said confidently, "don't like people who are meaty-mouthed". Once there, his diplomatic training naturally reasserted itself. He set out to please everybody, with predictable results.

Neither side has ever been further from the "mean compromise" in which diplomacy's truth ever lies. The Israeli government cold-shouldered his suggestion that Israel reject the UN Security Council resolution and co-operate with the investigators dispatched under that resolution. Could Mr Hurd have expected otherwise? Next it was the Palestinians' turn to be outraged. The foreign secretary may well have been misquoted as saying that Britain was "opposed" to a Palestinian state, when all he did was repeat the familiar British position that Palestinians should be able to decide their own future. But then anything short of unequivocal support for such a state was unlikely to dispel Palestinian suspicions.

For a British foreign secretary to be bizarrely denounced as both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli inside 24 hours shows the danger of such exercises in futile interventionism. That Britain was once involved in the politics of the Levant confers on the Foreign Office, or the British government, no continuing responsibility for resolving its conflicts. Mr Hurd is not the first minister to succumb to an overdose of history. May he be the last.

Opting out of primary schools

From the Director of Education,
London Borough of
Hammersmith and Fulham

Sir, The Government's stated policy is that local education authorities should be reducing the number of places in primary schools in line with the falling school population.

Hammersmith and Fulham has existed as an education authority for only six months. We inherited a situation of vast over-provision of primary school places compared with the number of children of primary school age in the borough.

With the support and, indeed, at the behest of the Department of Education, we undertook an early review of primary provision with the stated aim of closing and amalgamating schools. We undertook a thorough consultative exercise, endeavouring to obtain consensus around agreed educational criteria which should be used to make decisions on closure. These criteria relate to the National Curriculum and local

management of schools and have commanded widespread support. However, it is too much to expect individual schools to happily acquiesce in their own closure.

By seeking to extend the possibility of opting out to primary schools (report, October 11) Mr MacGregor has driven a coach and horses through our, or any other LEA's ability to exercise its legal responsibility for planning primary provision properly. This would make it impossible for local authorities not just to implement their own policies, but to implement one of the major policies of the Government in relation to reducing surplus places.

I hope we do not get the blame when we are unable to carry out those responsibilities effectively.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINE WHARTFORD,
Director of Education,
London Borough of
Hammersmith and Fulham,
Ground Floor, Banda House,
Cambridge Grove, W6,
October 12.

Education vouchers

From Mr David Martin, MP for
Portsmouth South (Conservative)

Sir, Ronald Butt's strictures (October 15) on the lack of a coherent Conservative theme for future domestic policy included scolding education vouchers, while urging the Government "to address the fundamental question of how to create a fully independently managed and centrally state-funded school system freed from local authority and teachers' politics".

That is precisely what supporters of education vouchers see as the central objective. Instead of begging the question, can we have Mr Butt's better alternative to achieve it?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID MARTIN,
House of Commons,
October 15.

From the Headmaster of the
Cardinal Vaughan Memorial
School

Sir, I am at a loss to understand why education vouchers are back on the Government's education agenda. It cannot be to support independent schools. After all, the independent sector is said to be booming, scarcely surprisingly in

view of the assisted places scheme. Local financial management is surely a very good way, in due course, of raising standards. Better still, of course, is grant-maintained status, a path I recommend wholeheartedly.

Yours faithfully,
A. S. J. PELLEGRINI,
Headmaster,
The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial
School,
89 Addison Road, W14,
October 16.

From Mr Robert Chambers

Sir, Stuart Maclure ("Giving vouchers a sure start in life", October 16) argues cogently for the "sure fire winner" of nursery school vouchers and rightly points out on the way that a full educational voucher scheme is now feasible and possibly cost effective.

What he does not point out is that it would require no extra legislation from central Government if a go-ahead local authority was to choose to make educational arrangements, either nursery or all education, on this basis.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT CHAMBERS
(Assistant Director),
The Freedom Association,
35 Westminster Bridge Road, SE1,
October 16.

Relief agencies

From Sir Noel Moynihan

Sir, Nicholas Hinton is the Director-General of the Save the Children Fund, an organisation which continually and rightly stresses the continuity of its work in many countries: here and overseas as against the one-off emergency work occasionally undertaken with the five members of the Disaster Emergency Committee. It was therefore surprising to find him applying such contrary reasoning to the "40 associated agencies" of the United Nations ("Wanted: a UN book-keeping force", October 9).

Those of us who have seen, over the past 30 years or more, the never-ending work of UNDP, Unesco, UNHCR, WHO and many other UN agencies in such

countries as Afghanistan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Iran, Turkey and countless others can never doubt the great humanitarian advantages brought to them wherever the assistance is given.

Mr Hinton is right to draw new attention to the bureaucratic processes in the UN apparatus but his suggested solution to the climbing of the cumbersome Olympus he describes is totally impracticable, however necessary. If governments cannot control the UN and the UN is incapable of policing itself, it will not suffer an international non-governmental unit to do so.

Yours etc.,
NOEL MOYNIHAN,
Herstmonceux Place,
Flowers Green,
Near Hailsham, East Sussex,
October 12.

Directory enquiries

From Prebendary John
C. de la T. Davies

Sir, There are two classes of directory enquiries for which it would be unfair of British Telecom to make any charge (report, October 11). There should be no charge for answering an enquiry for a new number not yet in the directory. How else can we discover them?

There should be no charge for answering an enquiry for a number on an exchange within one's local area, if the exchange and its numbers are not included in one's own directory.

For instance, there are 14 exchanges excluded from our directory but in our local area, among them such useful places as Aberavenny and Monmouth, and, believe it or not, Longtown Castle, which is part of our south Herefordshire district and our rural deanery of Abbeydore; in-

deed our rural dean lives at Longtown near its castle!

Yours sincerely,
JOHN C. de la T. DAVIES,
Peterchurch Rectory,
Hereford,
October 11.

From Mr Richard Masters

Sir, British Telecom's decision to charge for calls to directory enquiries would be less objectionable to people in towns like this, situated on the edge of one of its arbitrary areas, if the directories provided free were more appropriate to our needs.

Our "local" directories (ordinary and Yellow Pages) contain the names of subscribers 30 miles to the north on the other side of Bristol but not some of those on our own exchange who live in villages two miles to the south.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD MASTERS,
14 Wick Hollow,
Glastonbury, Somerset.

Planning gain

From Mrs A. J. Carlyon

Sir, I see planning gain (letters, September 10, 20, 28) as a temptation to the hard-pressed elected members of a district planning committee to agree to a planning application because they know that the need is there and that there is no other way of funding the project without the developers' financial assistance.

We in Cornwall are suffering from exactly the same disease as Oxford (September 28), namely over-development. Our infrastructure is fragile and is stretched

to the limit, but still the developers press on in the name of progress. Planning applications are heard and refused, appeals protracted but eventually dismissed by the Department of the Environment, but within months the same application is before the planning committee for consideration yet again. Is this really democracy?

Yours faithfully,
ARMOREL J. CARLYON
(Chairman, Carrick branch,
Council for the Protection of
Rural England),
3 Strangways Villas,
Truro, Cornwall.

On the wrong lines

From Mr Scott McIntosh

Sir, Matthew Parris's column on trams (October 6) was amusing, but he was wide of the mark in his understanding of modern tramway (or light railway) systems.

The Blackpool system is of course now rather outdated, but nevertheless it is still a fine example of how electric traction can move large crowds faster and with less damage to the environment than can any motor system. Modern trams can carry over 20,000 passengers an hour in each direction on twin tracks; to carry the same number in private cars would require ten lanes in each direction.

Among the "nine things" Mr Parris clearly did not know about light railways, also include the facts that "one short circuit" does not halt tram or train systems; that modern trams can run up to 50 mph, with better acceleration than road vehicles because of the smooth ride of railed vehicles; that noise measurements in France and the Netherlands show the noise emitted by a bus to be twice as great as that from a modern tram; and that accidents per passenger mile on European tram-

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

Price of books at authors' cost?

From Mr Martin Short

Sir, As an author whose last book rose to third in the non-fiction best-seller lists, I welcome Dillon's defiance (report, October 15) of the net book agreement. What infuriates me is the power of another chain of bookshops to secure a vast profit at my expense. Studying my latest six-monthly returns I was shocked to see that on 18,227 paperback sales (half the total), my 7½ per cent royalty had been calculated not on the cover price of £4.99 but on £2.41. This reduced my royalties from £6.821 to £3.294, or 18p a copy. When I asked why, I was told that one chain now has so much market clout that it had squeezed a discount of over 50 per cent out of my publisher. This gave my publisher the contractual right to pay me only on the discounted price, yet the chain was selling my book for the full £4.99.

Terry Malher, of Dillons, is slashing prices at no cost to authors, even though his discount is far less than that commanded by his biggest competitor, which still expects the public to pay top whack.

Having taken 18 months to research and write my latest book, I am depressed by the fact that, whatever its sales, my profit will be almost nothing. It seems the only way even a best-selling writer may survive in future is to buy copies of his or her own book at author's discount and sell them by mail order from home.

Yours indebtedly,
MARTIN SHORT,
10 Stucley Place, NW1,
October 16.

From Mr Ian Clark

Sir, I fear that you have allowed slick publicity to sway your objectivity (leading article, October 15). If the net book agreement were to be abolished it is true that some book prices would fall, but only the best sellers. American experience has demonstrated that, outside the "top 30", average book prices have actually risen since the early 1980s, when discounting began there.

Resolution 242

From the President of the Board of
Deputies of British Jews

Sir, Professor Harold Lydall (October 13) refers to the United Nations Security Council resolution of November 22, 1967. The key words in that resolution are "emphasising the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war..."

Mr George Brown, Foreign Secretary at the time, writing to the then President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, interpreted Resolution 242 and stated that it did not impose any requirement upon Israel to withdraw from any territory in advance of a permanent settlement for peace.

I drew this correspondence to the attention of Mr William Waldegrave, MP, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in March, 1989. I subsequently received a letter from his office, confirming that her Majesty's Government fully accepts and stands by that interpretation of Resolution 242.

Yours etc.,
LIONEL KOPELOWITZ,
President,
The Board of Deputies of
British Jews,
Woburn House,
Tavistock Square, WC1,
October 15.

From Mr Steven H. Fruhman

Sir, Resolution 242 calls for Israel to withdraw from territories (not

Nor is it necessarily true that lower book prices lead to increased book sales. Most studies have shown that the book market is relatively inelastic. General economic conditions and consumer confidence have a much greater bearing on book sales than unit prices. How else do you explain the volume increase in books sold in the UK during the 1980s, when book prices also rose much faster than general inflation?

During the 1980s American books have been much more expensive than their English equivalents, one reason why our publishers have enjoyed a buoyant export trade. The temporary weakness of the dollar may have changed the situation for a few titles, but most American backlist titles are still more expensive over there.

If you are really so keen to see American discounting over here, are you willing to accept the wholesale (rather than retail) price maintenance that is statutorily enforced over there? Our publishers could then only grant quantity discounts to booksellers that could be economically justified in a court of law as resulting from proven cost savings. The large overriding discounts demanded by our major chains would be swept away. Our smaller booksellers would enjoy competing on such terms — all they ask for is fair competition on a level playing field.

The opponents of the current agreement have twice recently failed to convince the Office of Fair Trading that there is sufficient evidence to take to the restrictive practices court, where the NBA must be judged. The supporters of the agreement — a significant majority of both publishers and booksellers — do have some powerful arguments on their side.

Yours sincerely,
IAN CLARK,
4 The Crest,
Surrey,
October 16.

"the territories" as stated by Professor Lydall) occupied in 1967. The omission of the definite article, which was made clear that a complete Israeli withdrawal was not contemplated.

It also calls — this is scarcely ever mentioned — for termination of all claims or states of belligerency, respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

Contrary to Professor Lydall's new, non-implementation owes everything to the fact that, with the exception of Egypt, no Arab State has either recognised Israel, terminated its claims or state of belligerency, or recognised Israel's political independence or territorial integrity, within secure boundaries or otherwise.

Professor Lydall is not, however, alone in his error — Mr Hurd told Jeremy Paxman on *Newsnight* last Thursday that 242 required Israel to withdraw from "the occupied territories". If academics and politicians get the facts right they will be better placed to reach sustainable conclusions.

Yours faithfully,
STEVEN H. FRUHMANN,
The Glen,
34 New Hall Road,
Salford,
Manchester 7,
October 15.

Hospital security

From Mr Colin Goodhind

Sir, I was instrumental last year in establishing a security management system to control movement throughout a Portsmouth hospital, mainly during the hours of darkness. Just under 4,000 staff wear identity badges, many doubling as access cards for authorised personnel, allowing them into predetermined areas.

The system has resulted in a general atmosphere of security awareness from which staff and patients benefit.

In my opinion this would have gone a long way towards preventing the recent assault on a young girl in a Carshalton hospital (reports October 15, 16) and should be considered before elaborate closed-circuit TV systems, manned guarding and all the other methods susceptible to human failing.

Yours sincerely,
COLIN GOODHIND,
Longford House,
1 Longford Road,
Melksham, Wiltshire,
October 16.

way systems are significantly lower than on the corresponding bus systems.

Modern materials allow overhead wiring to be light and inconspicuous; one of my colleagues was once wrongly accused of having it "touched out" of photographs he was displaying at a public meeting. And finally, trams do not pollute the towns they run in — power stations may pollute but technology exists to remove almost all the pollutants.

Yours faithfully,
SCOTT MCINTOSH (Light Rail
Development Planner),
London Transport,
55 Broadway, SW1,
October 12.

Harking back

From Mr Russell Chamberlin

Sir, To describe Melina Mercouri as "the Greek actress turned socialist politician" (report, October 16) is a bit like describing Margaret Thatcher as "the English chemist turned prime minister". Melina Mercouri's heyday as actress was some little while ago. Her socialist loyalty is a continuance. And while, in Britain, many may have bristled over her espousal of the Elgin Marbles, would that we, too, Sir, had somebody, as in your report (earlier editions), with the determination "to restore pride in the capital's cultural heritage".

Yours etc.,
RUSSELL CHAMBERLIN,
3 Harvey Gardens, Addison Road,
Guildford, Surrey,
October 16.

Turning a phrase

From Dr Angela Paterson

Sir, It can be amusing to compare metaphorical equivalents in different cultures, as does your correspondent Mary Booth (October 13), but occasionally one language does seem to have the edge on another in capturing our experience. Thus after a downpour I am often tempted to borrow from the French and describe myself with more satisfying emphasis as soaked, not to the skin, but to the bones.

Yours faithfully,
ANGELA PATERSON,
215 Boroughbridge Road, York,
October 14.

From Mrs R. Smallwood

Sir, In Italy we "know our chickens" while in England, I am told, you "know your onions".

Yours faithfully,
ROSANNA SMALLWOOD,
Studio Cottage, Tarlton,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire,
October 13.

1997

HEALTH

MEDICAL BRIEFING Dr Thomas Stuttford

A visit to Haworth, and a glance through the diary written by the father of the Brontë sisters, shows that it was not only the girls and Branwell who disturbed the nights in the household with their coughing. The Rev Patrick Brontë suffered from chronic bronchitis, and he was greatly troubled by his cough. In the days when tuberculosis was rife, the Haworth scenario was common: the vulnerable children developed obvious TB, while their grandmother or grandfather, whose immune state had come to terms with the infection, coughed away, spreading the bacillus around the family, although they themselves suffered little more

Is TB coming back?

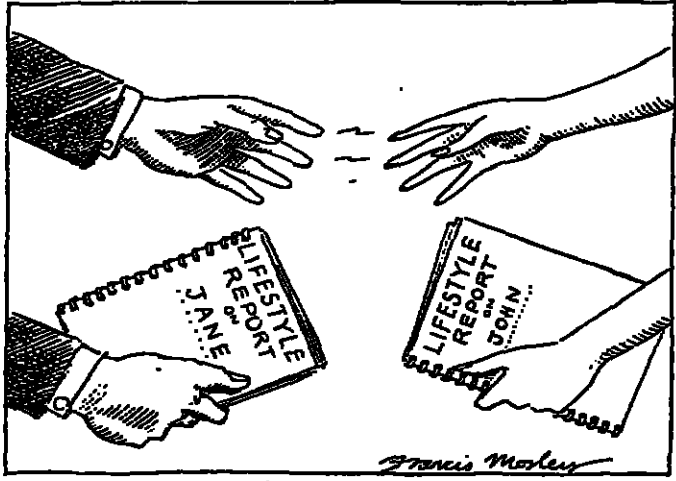
than inconvenience from the disease. Aids may change the traditional picture, for no longer will it be elderly grandparents who infect the family but the raffish Uncle George who, in the words of Sir Donald Acheson, the chief medical officer, has

been sleeping with people he did not know. Aids reduces the body's immune response to a wide variety of conditions, so that infections and cancers which had previously been so rare that they were confronted only in the pages of textbooks have now become comparatively commonplace.

Aids patients are vulnerable to TB, and in consequence the disease may make a comeback in Britain just as it has, according to reports from the World Health Organisation this week, in many overseas countries. But, as yet, Aids is still not sufficiently common for this complication to have affected British statistics: the number of notifications of TB for the last quarter available shows little change from those notified in the same quarter in the previous year.

The spread of Aids in the heterosexual community is, as predicted, increasing, and is following the expected pattern, albeit at a slower rate than forecast.

So Sir Donald's advice was sound, even if quaintly reported; whereas a formal introduction and a long courtship are unimportant, a knowledge not only of a potential sexual partner's own lifestyle, but also of the habits of the social groups in which he or she has moved, may be life-saving.



Beethoven's eighth

The theory that Beethoven died from sarcoidosis is an ingenious one which can never be disproved; but it is known that his signs, symptoms and eventual mode of death were not those commonly associated with this strange disease.

Press reports following the publication of Dr Tom Falterman's treatise on Beethoven's health must have made gloomy reading for the 2,200 British patients who are newly diagnosed each year as having sarcoid; they should take heart, for they are almost as likely to write a symphony as to die from liver disease or go deaf.

Although sarcoid involves the liver in 70 per cent of patients, this infiltration can usually be demonstrated only by liver biopsy; symptoms from it are rare, and do not figure in the list of the six main reasons why the disease is first diagnosed. Experts agree that only a few cases of sarcoid develop chronic liver disease, and that death from liver disease in sarcoidosis is even rarer.

In Britain only 1 per cent of patients with sarcoid have involvement of the central nervous system, and even when it does strike the cranial nerves, it is much more usual for the facial nerve to be damaged, causing a drooping, paralysed face, or the optic nerve, with loss of vision, rather than the eighth auditory nerve. If Beethoven had been one of the unlucky few with nerve damage, he is much more likely to have gone blind than deaf, particularly as sarcoidosis also frequently causes an inflammatory eye condition (uveitis). Syphilis, however, which Beethoven is reputed to have had, has a predilection for attacking the eighth nerve, and hearing loss is common.

The cause of sarcoid is unknown; it produces changes, granulomas, similar to those caused by TB, and like TB can attack practically any part of the body, but it is not infectious. The theory that an allergy might be the cause enjoys periodic support, but has never been proved, and it seems probable that sarcoid can be provoked by a variety of different agents.

The disease, which usually starts with joint pains, unexplained fever and erythema nodosum (a skin rash), later usually attacks the lungs and the glands near them. Respiratory

problems are the usual reason for any disabilities, and death when it does occur is usually either from respiratory failure, or heart failure secondary to lung disease. A third of patients make a complete recovery, a third are left with minor residual damage, a third need long-term treatment, and in only well under 5 per cent does sarcoid contribute to a patient's death.

It still seems probable that Beethoven had syphilis and died from chronic cirrhosis secondary to alcoholism, a dual pathology which would account for all his symptoms.

Too much of a good thing

Geography classes are enlivened by stories of the fate which befell explorers who ate polar bear or seal liver. These livers are so packed with vitamin A that the heartless explorers paid for their carnage by developing acute hypervitaminosis: they became sleepy and lethargic, possibly fatal complications in the Arctic cold, and also suffered from chronic headaches and vomiting; later, their skin peeled. Similar but less dramatic signs and symptoms affected children whose parents, anxious to see that nothing was spared in giving them a good start in life, overdid the cod liver oil and vitamin pills. The average capsule contains 4,000 international units, and as overdosage is usually regarded as over 100,000 international units a day for adults, 20,000 a day for children, it is not easily achieved; when it is, however, the victim develops dry skin and sparse hair as well as vague joint pains, headaches and a general lassitude. Occasionally the liver is affected, but in nearly all cases recovery is swift and complete

once the vitamin A is discontinued. More recently it has been shown that overdosage with vitamin A causes occasional foetal abnormalities, and the most recent suggestion is that it may not only be the polar bear and seal liver which contains potentially dangerous levels of vitamin A, but that a vulnerable unborn child might also be affected by the much smaller quantities of vitamin A present in liver bought at the butcher's. Changes in vitamin A levels in butcher's liver are thought to be related to the high quantities of the vitamin present in some animal feeds; the livers of all animals concentrate and store vitamin A.

Vitamin A in reasonable quantities is not only good for women when pregnant, but an essential part of their diet. It seems highly improbable that any woman is going to give birth to a deformed child because she chose liver pâté rather than potted shrimps as an *hors-d'oeuvre*, or had calves' liver as the main course, but she should perhaps avoid eating large quantities of liver until research workers have decided whether there is any substance in this latest scare.

If business is personal

Companies are calling on outside agencies to solve their staff's personal problems.

Liz Gill reports

Rani Bains, a clinical psychologist, has consulting rooms in a Nash crescent overlooking Regent's Park, in London. There, amid the potted plants, clients get the benefit of her professional expertise at her company's expense. It seems a long way from the days when a good cry in the ladies or a cup of tea in the canteen were the nearest most businesses got to personal counselling.

Confidential help for emotional and psychological problems is increasingly a measure of company concern, and those who offer it see it as a logical progression from traditional occupational health. Bill Edge, the personnel manager of ICL's logistics operations in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, says: "It's the last piece of the jigsaw. We believe you should look after people as a whole, their mental and emotional as well as physical well-being."

The company has just set up an employee assistance programme offering its 1,500 staff in Stevenage, and their families, confidential advice on anything from drug abuse to domestic disputes.

"We have adopted an arm's-length approach," Mr Edge says. "We advertise the service and that's it. That is why we wrote to people at home. We wanted it to be an individual, rather than a heavy corporate thing."

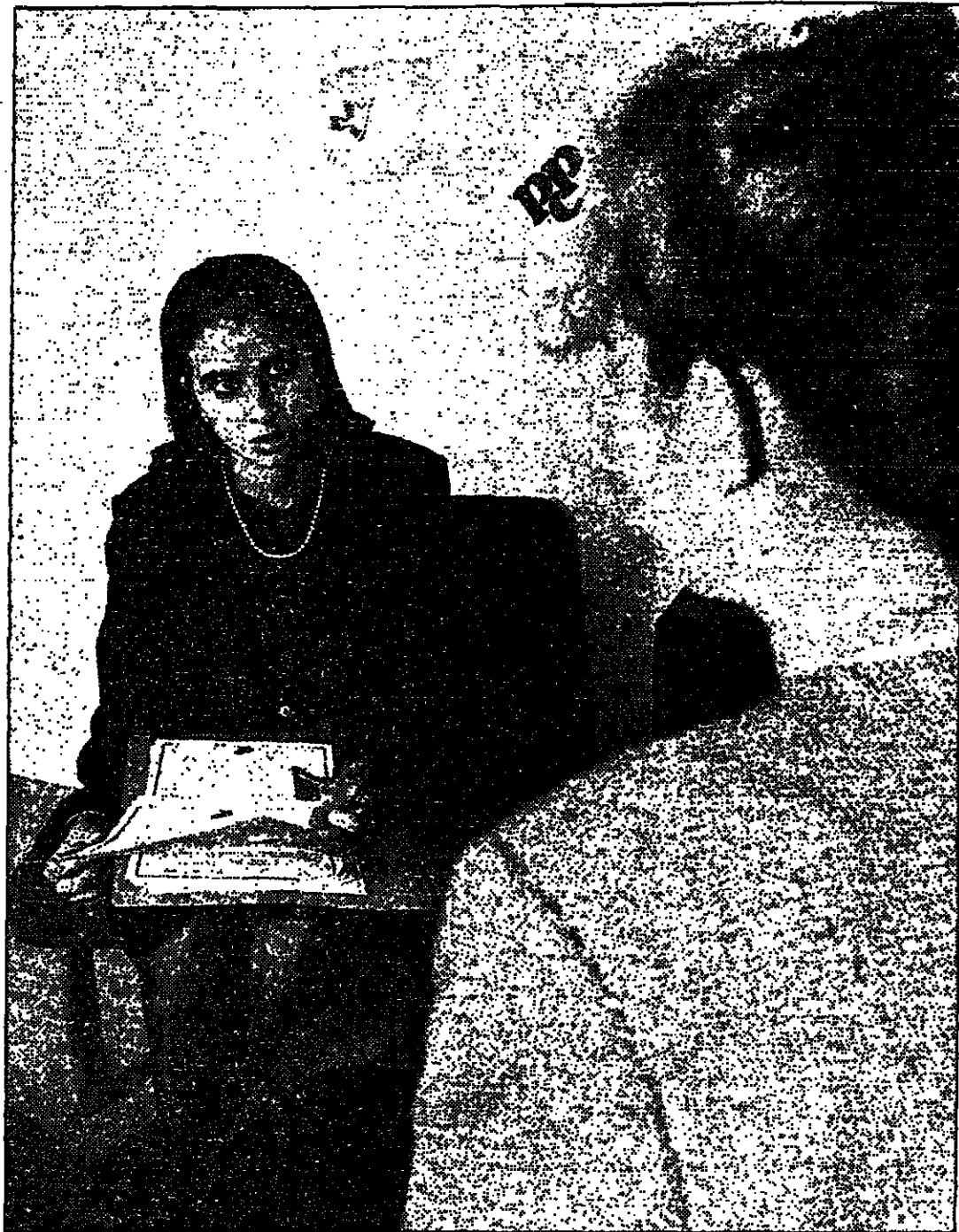
A key element in the programme is that it is run by an outside agency, Personal Performance Consultants UK (PPC), which has about 20 similar schemes in Britain, covering between 10,000 and 15,000 employees in companies including oil, banking and computers. The annual cost is about £30 per worker. "The basic concept is that the organisation buys our service as a welfare benefit. It is off-site, free to the employee, and confidential," says Alistair Anderson, the managing consultant with PPC. "I think we are far more conscious nowadays that you have to look after your staff."

"Some companies have set up in-house counselling but often it is not very popular. It is naive to think people will go if they have to walk past the managing director's office to a door marked, in effect, 'problems solved here'."

PPC has a network of 80 counsellors, usually clinical psychologists, psychiatric registrars or social workers to whom clients can be sent after an initial telephone interview.

They are supervised and all follow the same approach, which is, Mr Anderson says, essentially one of problem-solving rather than psycho-analytical or behavioural.

In the United States, where assistance programmes have flourished for 20 years, the average take-up rate by employees has been about 8 per cent. Marital or domestic difficulties account for 40 per cent of referrals, drug or alcohol abuse for 10 per cent and psychological conditions, such as



A sympathetic ear: but Rani Bains would never suggest a troubled employee should resign

depression or anxiety, for a further 10 per cent. The rest cover a wide range of legal, financial, career.

Although PPC has been established for only two years, the figures compiled in Britain so far show a similar trend. Clients come from the boardroom as well as the shop floor and are as likely to be male as female.

Companies are not told the names of employees using the service, but they are given quarterly reports on the numbers and the type of problems. McDonnell Douglas, the American aviation company, estimated that, over a four-year period, reduced absenteeism and better productivity resulted in a saving of \$4 for every dollar spent on counselling.

ICL, which is running its programme as a one-year pilot study, also anticipates an improvement in efficiency. Mr Edge says: "We hope there will be a measurable increase in morale. Some problems take staff away from their work mentally, if not physically."

A counselling service can also be a management tool, because an employee whose performance is seriously below par can be referred for help. More than 95 per cent of cases, however, are self-referrals. According to Ms Bains, a PPC counsellor, they are often the most confidential help with personal problems. They also have a wide

range of contacts outside the company to help deal with specific needs. He says, however, that smaller companies may not have the resources or the time for in-house counselling. "The other advantage of an outside agency is that it is seen to be independent of the company. There is always a suggestion that an in-house department will be partial, even though that is not the case."

One of the main difficulties faced by counsellors is that many personal problems are a result of working conditions: and what counselling service, paid for by a company, is going to tell staff to work less hard, or insist on extra manpower to ease the workload?

Mr Anderson says that counselling services do, in fact, give companies feedback. "You wouldn't get to first base telling a company it had to take on another 300 staff — but you can point out, for example, that you are getting an inappropriate number of referrals from one department and they can put two and two together."

Ms Bains says she would never tell anyone to leave their job. "The individual must make the choice. But we can facilitate understanding and teach coping strategies so that people can control their workload or feel more confident in dealing with their boss."

Dr Howard Vaile, the chairman of the BMA's occupational health committee, believes it is perfectly proper for a company to concern itself with the psychological and emotional health of its staff. Dr Vaile is a medical adviser at Imperial Metal Industries, in Birmingham, where he and his colleagues are frequently asked for confidential help with personal problems. They also have a wide

range of contacts outside the company to help deal with specific needs. He says, however, that smaller companies may not have the resources or the time for in-house counselling. "The other advantage of an outside agency is that it is seen to be independent of the company. There is always a suggestion that an in-house department will be partial, even though that is not the case."

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When truth is the highest premium

Insurance companies insist on a medical before customers take out a life policy. But what do you do when they then 'load' your premium — and refuse to say why you are a health risk?

ON THE whole, I trust doctors. And on the whole, I trust big insurance companies. But that trust can be misplaced.

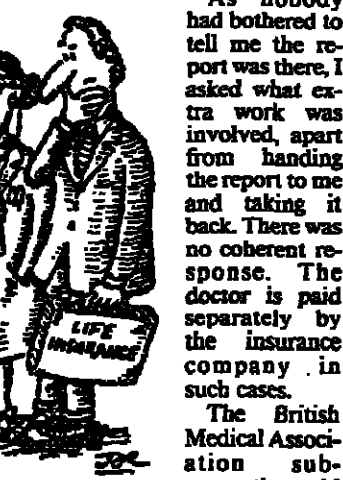
The last time I had to get a new life insurance policy (to get a bigger mortgage), I was given a medical by a doctor I had never met before. He produced a report, which I was not allowed to see.

I was subsequently informed by my broker that I had been "loaded" because of something in my medical report. Momentarily worried, I rang the insurance company, Sun Alliance. Why had it rated me an above-average risk? Sun Alliance would not tell me. If I had any enquiries about my health, I should ask my GP. She could not enlighten me.

Was it because I had asthma? Was it because I had an irritable bowel? Or was it because I had confessed to drinking the equivalent of a bottle of wine a day?

Or was it something else? It did not bear thinking about, so I forgot it until recently, when my wife and I decided that I ought to take out some sort of health insurance. This time, when I got the form, I ticked the box that asked if I wanted to see any medical report before it went to the insurers. I heard nothing for more than a month, when my broker rang to say that the insurance company had sent off the form to my doctor several weeks previously, and had subsequently dispatched a reminder, but without response.

I rang my doctor, who said she had done it long ago. I reminded her I had asked to see the report before it went back to the insurers.



should have been levied only if I had required a photocopy of the report. This was not the case, and I am attempting to recover the £7.50.

David Mountain, the chief underwriter with Friends Provident, said that in my case there had been an error. I should have been informed when the form went to my doctor, but I was down as not wishing to see the

report. He confirmed that Friends Provident, like other insurance companies, paid the doctor £20 for a report. He also confirmed that it was not company policy to disclose reasons for "loading". This was up to the client's GP. He would not like, for instance, to have to break it to somebody that he or she had multiple sclerosis. A GP was the proper person to discuss a patient's ailments, and to provide the appropriate reassurance.

All very fair, but Mr Mountain was not able to discount the possibility that a GP, while aware of the patient's ailments,

might not be able to say why he or she had been "loaded". This had been my case, and Richard Street, Sun Alliance's manager for group risk and underwriting, promised to look into it on my behalf.

He looked up my file and told me that I had been "loaded" — actually no increase in premium, but a limit on the extent of the cover — for two reasons: my asthma and my drinking. The obvious moral is to give up drinking, or keep quiet.

On general practice, Mr Street said that where an independent doctor undertook an examination (for which the company pays a

standard rate of £27.50), there was no "automatic process" whereby his findings were made known to either the patient or the patient's GP. When I protested that the examination might uncover some ailment that the GP had missed, he could say only that "medical ethics" would apply, and he was sure that if it were anything serious, the doctor would inform either the patient or the GP. Almost certainly he is right, but I would like to be certain.

Since January 1, 1989, people have had the right to see their own doctor's medical reports done for insurance or employment purposes — unless the doctor feels this would be harmful. But we have no right to find out from an insurance company why we have been "loaded". We should have.

RUPERT MORRIS

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The last war of liberation for the BBC



Early days: Esther Rantzen in 1971

Joan Bakewell, Angela Rippon and Kate Adie helped end prejudice against female television presenters. Now, Esther Rantzen says, women must enter the door to the executive suite

The problem of wasted female talent is far from unique to the BBC. It is a paradox of our times that women collect at the bottom of the labour pool, like silt. Sir David Attenborough might consider observing the working human female for his next series — in the worst paid jobs women are as multitudinous as the fish in the sea, in the top executive roles they are as rare as unicorns.

This does not just apply to the sweat-shops: walk into any BBC production office and you will find at least half the staff are women. But take the lift to the executive floor and they have almost disappeared. Will the new policies announced last week, the job-sharing, the creches, the women's training programmes, correct the imbalance? Can the BBC achieve the fairly modest target it has set itself and reduce the 90 per cent male domination of its most senior jobs to a mere 70 per cent by 1995?

Theoretically, it could be possible. There are positive precedents, after all. Twenty-five years ago, *Panorama* was a male ghetto and proud of it. In the Sixties it was understood among television executives that women could never read the news: a tragic news item would make them break down and sob in front of the cameras. It was a foolish theory even before Kate Adie outpaced bomb and bullet to disprove it. But it was seriously held, just as it was believed that no woman could direct a variety show because she would be appalled by the comedians' language. I was told in 1968 that I could not report from Belfast because nobody could decide what a female reporter in a war zone should wear. Brilliant pioneering women — Jackie Gillot, Joan Bakewell, Angela Rippon, Sue Lawley — took on that prejudice and defeated it. Further, they proved that viewers enjoy watching talented women on the screen, so that now no producer would consider creating a new programme without women

presenters. The battle on the screen has not been entirely won. I still detect in the spit and sawdust of the BBC's newsrooms traces of the old prejudice. For example, when women presenters venture into the world of entertainment, they face the possibility of not being considered for current affairs programmes. Men are allowed far more leeway. When Sir Robin Day appeared with Morecambe and Wise, cowering under a table in a tin hat, that was just him showing his genial side: more power to him. But after Angela Rippon joined Eric and Ernie's high-kicking chorus line, she was consigned to *Come Dancing*. If women journalists show their legs,

If women journalists show their legs, their colleagues at once label them feet of clay

their colleagues at once label them feet of clay. If Sir David were a woman, his shorts would be his downfall. But, if women have won their on-screen battles, it is behind the scenes that the real problems lie. I first joined television production as a researcher in 1965. Jobs for women were then as precious as gold dust, so when I was given the job of filing 23,000 photographs I was properly grateful. The gratitude wore a little thin after the six tedious months spent bent double over dusty filing cabinets. It wore even thinner when I realised that my men friends from university, my exact contemporaries with precisely my qualifications, were already out directing films for the nightly current affairs programme. It was explained to me, kindly but firmly, that cameramen and sound recordists would not work for women — that was why there were no women film directors. There are now. The battle now is to recruit women as camera-persons, and sound recordists.

Although every television production office is filled with women today, marriage and children still create a conflict in their lives, and make promotion difficult. I had a very talented secretary, Janice Booth, who was about to be promoted to become a production assistant when she got



Still fighting in 1990: Esther Rantzen says she "still detects traces of the old prejudice"

pregnant. She was immediately faced with a choice. If she were to continue her career, her baby would have to be looked after by a child minder. She would not be able to afford a qualified nanny. Janice demanded the best for her daughter, so she resigned, and took part-time work on a freelance basis. Her two daughters amply repay the love, the creative input, the time and skill she has devoted to them. But the television industry, the BBC, have lost her.

I have other colleagues in more senior roles who also put their families first, and for them the new measures would make little difference. They have reached the level of senior producer, have achieved considerable professional reputations. For them, the choice was to move up the BBC's steep ladder of promotion, or to leave and join the industry's pool of freelance producers/directors. They chose to leave. As independents they can pick and choose work to suit their hours, rather than be dominated by the office diary. But also I suspect they made their decision because promotion in television can be

profoundly unattractive. At comparatively junior levels, researchers, directors and producers have immediate contact with programme material, with people and places all over the world. They can walk through any door, the tower block in Paddington, the vaults in the Bank of England, if they are there to make a programme. They can enjoy the crackle of their work on the air, the most exciting and immediate communication with the viewer. The adrenalin of programme-making is addictive. I speak as an addict so seriously hooked that when once I was asked to apply for a senior executive job, I found it impossible even to contemplate unhooking myself from my job as producer/presenter.

But once women tread the ladder of promotion, they must trade this immediate reward for the more subtle ones of commissioning, hiring and firing, allocating budgets, deciding policy. The pastry cooks become the menu-planners. They gain power and status but many women regard these as

millstones, not milestones. So I believe that to achieve the new BBC targets of women in senior management it will take more than a change of working practice by the men who run the BBC. It will take a real change in attitudes and aspiration by the women who work there. They will have to be prepared to fail, and fail publicly. They will have to learn to make the nasty decision, to fire, to cut budgets, to withstand painful controversy, criticism and political battles because that is the price of the most senior jobs. They will have to give up the fun, the high of direct programme making. What are the rewards?

The rewards will be the satisfaction of enabling other talent, of expressing female strengths, providing role models in the office and behind it. The men who run the BBC have opened the door, not wide, but wide enough for women to stop kicking and start walking through it. Will the women in broadcasting have the courage to take up the challenge?

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Oh, jings! Those were the days

In an age of pre-teen love comics, an appreciation of girls who were girls

Few things are as poignant as a really old children's comic. It is a solemn, autumnal thought that the little girls who first giggled over the adventures of Lettice Lee, the Greenest Girl in the School, are now contemplating the menopause and identifying more with Miss Froth, the headmistress. Belle of the Ballet has long since come down off her points, and probably taken a job as a regional arts administrator; Susan of St Brides will have discarded her starched cap and collar to marry Max, her uncannily respectful boyfriend. Perhaps someone should put up a statue to the Reverend Marcus Morris, the creator of *Eagle* and *Girl*: he tried so hard to keep childhood wholesome. It is not entirely his fault that he failed.

These melancholy reflections arise from a couple of evenings spent immersed in Denis Gifford's loving compilation of *The Best of Girl Annual 1952-1959*. The period appears to have been a golden one: after a rocky start in 1961 the sister paper to the more famous *Eagle* hit its stride rapidly and — with Mr Morris guided by thousands of young readers' letters — found a formula which worked.

At least, it worked until the Sixties struck: after the Cavern Club I doubt whether even the most gently brought-up girls would any longer have put up with profiles on the lines of "Dennis Lotis... with his dashing pink-painted piano", or indeed "Kenneth More, a naturally gay person".

Girl had a peculiar and endearing way with hell-raisers: there is a profile of Vivien Leigh which succeeds in mentioning two marriages but no divorce, and describes her nervous breakdown as "like an overworked motor-car... she was reconditioned, re-gearred and returned ready for the road again!". And the account of "shy, polite" Richard Burton and his wife Sybil is positively inspiring. At least, it inspires you to turn the page quickly and, "Make a Tyrolean Belt".

But that was standard Fifties fare. Far more important about *Girl* are the comic-strips, and an evening with these should wipe the patronising smile off any modern woman's face. The gloomy truth is that today's girl-children are offered absolutely nothing that comes near them for quality, breadth and feminist vision. Some, to be sure, are mere school and hospital soap operas, but they ranged wider than that. When Clare Francis and Naomi James were still in ankle socks, let me tell you, there was Captain Starling, flame-haired skipper of the yacht *Kestrel* ("Sam! Cram on all the sail she'll carry!"). There was Summa of her South Sea Isles, always game to save a pearl-diver from the jaws of a giant clam, and Martine, creeping over pagoda roofs to foil the bandits of

Huan Ming. All these girls — and even Susan of St Brides, the kind-hearted student nurse, — are drawn with strong features, clear eyes, and bodies robust enough to row against storms ("Jings! My strength's giving out!"). Their clothes, moreover, are suitable for clambering up ivy and through subterranean passages. None of them show the slightest tendency to define themselves through boyfriends, conform to social pressures or slump into premature wife-hood. They are young and free and just as good as boys, and they know it years before Greer, these were no female eunuchs. Coming in young at the dog-

end of it all, I vaguely remember the pleasure of stories in which girls led and instigated, instead of forever being rescued.

Reading today's teenage girls' magazines it does not take long to see what has happened. If there is a drawn strip, then lips pout, breasts are tip-tilted, and great tears roll down flawless cheeks. If there is an article on "What's more important? Boyfriends or a career?" it will hastily disown its message with "Speaking of careers, have you ever dreamt of being a model?" Not only is the vocabulary of all sub-teenage magazines minute, with everything "awesome!", or "mega groovy"; but the girls' magazines relentlessly reinforce the view that life without a boy is empty.

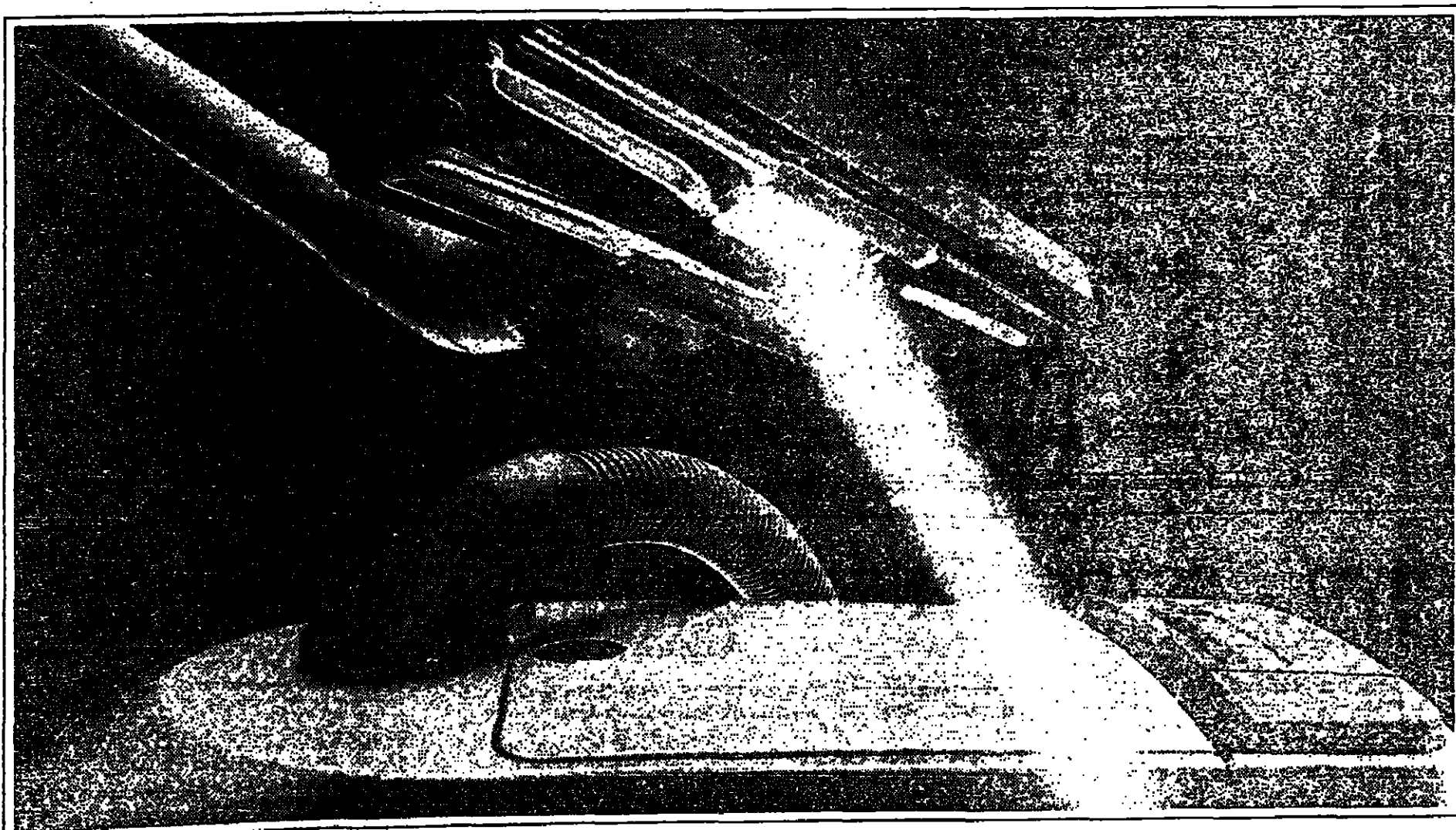
Fresh from the bracing fantasy of Wendy and Jinx rescuing a kidnapped heiress in their canoe, it is a shock to read the 1990 problem pages. They do their best, but betray a readership of girls enslaved by tawdry images of sexuality. The adjoining pages and advertisements all show girls leaning dependently on boys' chests: the *Girl* girl was at least offered models of self-assertion and bloody-minded independence.

So what happened to *Girl*? It died in the Sixties, was revived as a comic in 1980 by IPC, then relaunched with more fashion, beauty and pop to attract advertisers. It failed, and was ignominiously merged with *My Guy* in March of this year.

"It's romantic photo-stories," says Jackie Newcombe, publisher of young women's magazines at IPC. "With the odd social issue, of course. Like Aids." Absolutely no chance, then, of reviving any storylines about daring girl explorers wrestling giant clams? "You're joking. If you suggested that stuff to today's 13-year-olds they would say, 'Nah, it's got to be rap and hip-hop and lots of guys'. And it's got to have swearing in it. They always ask for street language." Even if they had asked, one feels, Mr Morris would not have given it to them.

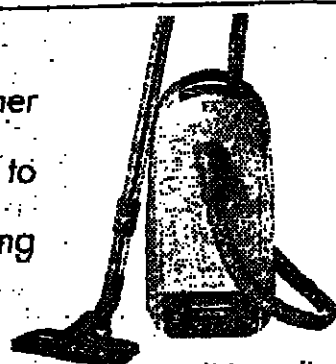
LIBBY PURVES

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Best of *Girl*, by Denis Gifford, will be published by Webb & Bower on October 25, (£14.95).



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ENCOUNTERS

Apple aims for big bite of the cherry

Computer giants in cut-price battle

Personal computer prices are continuing to fall as their manufacturers try to revive a dormant market with sharply falling growth rates. Computer magazines now advertise a host of less well known makes and a few more famous ones that start at less than £500.

In what is clearly a buyers' market, one of the best known computer companies, Apple, has decided that there might be something in the "pile them high, sell them cheap" strategy that made Amstrad's original personal computers so successful.

This week Apple announced a long awaited new range of three Macintosh computers that start from £660 (including VAT) - almost half the price of its current cheapest model. Called the Macintosh Classic and aimed at first time users, the cheapest black and white machine comes with one megabyte of memory and a floppy disc drive. It pitches Apple back into competition with IBM for cheaper machines. IBM recently announced its own computer for first time users - the PS/1 which sells for about £1,000.

Apple used its Macintosh computers to pioneer the concept of desktop publishing. Although the Classic will handle popular DTP packages, customers who want to use more sophisticated software will have to opt for the more expensive version with hard disc and increased memory that takes the price above £1,000.

A better choice for such applications might be the second new model, the LC, a relatively cheap colour computer with 2 megabytes of memory and a 40-megabyte hard disc at around £1,700. It includes a microphone to record and store voice messages with a computer file "in much the same way as handwritten notes are added to printed documents", says the company.

For serious business use there is a cheaper version of the Macintosh II series at around £2,600 - which includes the ability to place voice recordings in files so that they can "speak" to the reader.

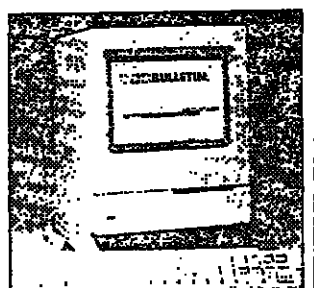
The problem for many buyers of personal computers is

that having decided on what level of power is required there is increasingly little difference between most brands.

That has not been the case with Apple which has never followed the rest of the market in producing machines compatible with the industry standard of IBM compatibility imposed by the runaway success of IBM's initial personal computer.

The difference has been both a strength and a weakness. Initially it gave Apple the ability to produce machines admired for their easy to use picture-based software.

Now competitors have been able to emulate many of the best features - helped most recently by the success of the Windows 3.0 program that can give IBM-style personal computers the same look and feel as a Macintosh yet remain compatible with industry standard software.



Challenger: Classic computer

Apple is also facing competition in the emerging market for multi-media systems that mix video pictures, sound and text.

Its products have begun to look seriously overpriced. Until now the company has managed to retain a gross profit margin of more than 50 per cent - considerably higher than its rivals.

But Apple's conversion to the idea of selling more and cheaper products did not impress the stock market this week, which is concerned about reduced profit margins.

Along with cheaper computers Apple is expected to become more amenable to licensing the Macintosh technology to others so that Macintosh clones may appear. The company has recently been in discussions with both Toshiba and Sony on the possibility of producing a laptop computer.

MATTHEW MAY

After North Sea gas and oil, engineers are now working on generating electricity from the oceans. Nick Nuttall reports

Free power from beneath the waves

British marine engineers are working with the Taiwanese government and industry to harvest electricity from the sea using a novel method known as ocean thermal energy conversion (Otec).

The five-megawatt project, which would provide power for about 5,000 homes, could lead to the wide-scale commercial development of a form of renewable energy claimed to be one of the world's most environmentally benign.

Unlike tidal and wave power, Otec systems work 24 hours a day, exploiting the temperature difference between the warm surface seas and the deep, cold, polar waters found in tropical and sub-tropical regions at 1,000-metre depths.

Many of the countries in these regions are reliant on fuel imports. Recent estimates from the United States calculate that 60,000 megawatts of the world's electricity could be generated from the oceans' temperature gradients by the year 2010.

Britain, with offshore engineering skills developed from its North Sea oil exploration, is funding technical and economic research on Otec systems at several academic centres, including Manchester and Newcastle universities. The research is co-ordinated by the Marine Technology Directorate in London, and could form part of Wealth from the Oceans, a new trade and industry initiative.

Many of the nations that could benefit from the vast renewable

energy potential of their neighbouring seas are also keen to promote agriculture and aquaculture. Otec systems, apart from generating electricity, bring up nutrient-rich cold waters from the deep that could be discharged into tanks, sited next to power stations, for raising fish and shellfish, and high-value marine plants such as seaweed for food and medical purposes.

'Virtually all the capital costs will be paid off in eight years'

Tests in Hawaii, where state-funded projects have been under investigation since the Seventies, indicate that when the nutrient-rich waters are exposed to warm sunlight at the surface, the growth of marine animals and plants is accelerated several-fold.

In addition, areas of the world with coastal borders that are short of drinking and irrigation water, such as the Caribbean island of St Lucia, can use part of an Otec plant's electricity production to desalinate sea water.

Studies are also being conducted around the world to develop Otec "grazing" systems that would roam the oceans, generating electricity to mine sea-bed minerals or to process ores at sea. The processing plants could also be used to split water into oxygen and hydrogen. The hydrogen could be shipped as a liquid fuel

or used as a raw material for making energy-intensive fertilisers.

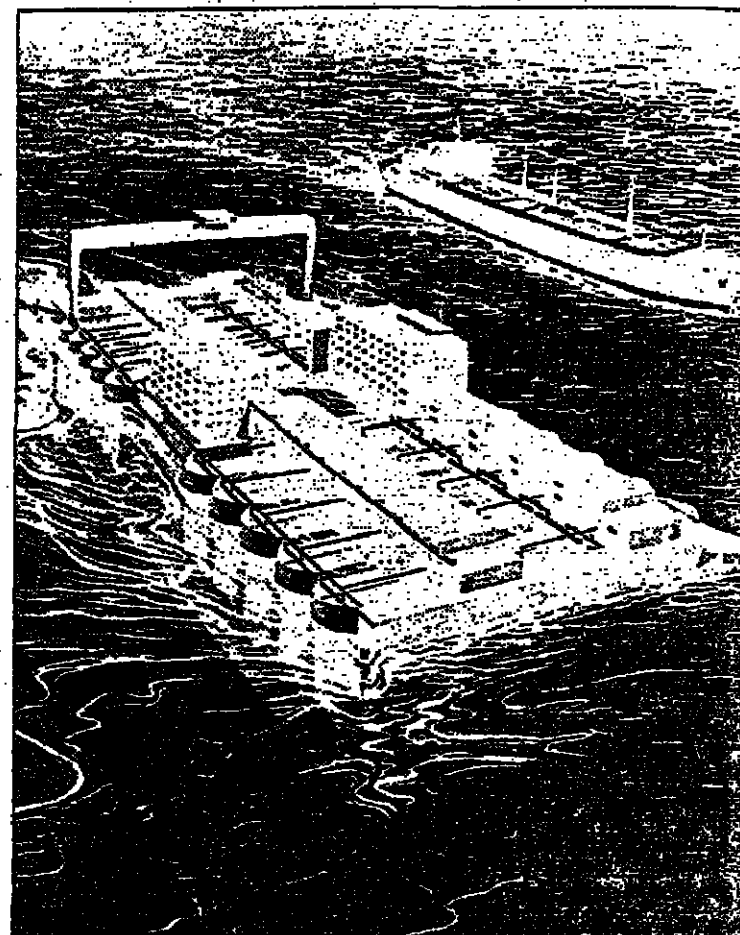
Details of the Taiwanese plans, published in the autumn issue of the Society for Underwater Technology's journal, *Underwater Technology*, comes at a time of growing interest.

Don Lennard, the director and chief executive of the Marine Technology Directorate in London and the managing director of Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Systems, of Orpington in Kent, says the present 2.5 per cent efficiency of such systems is poor when compared with a coal-fired or oil-fired power station, but the fuel is free.

Mr Lennard, a consultant to the Taiwanese programme, says: "It is an equation between the capital costs of an inefficient system, typically \$10,000 per kilowatt, and the much lower cost of a coal-fired or oil-fired power station, less than \$1,000 per kilowatt, but which you have to keep paying to fuel."

Calculations indicate that, with oil at \$28 to \$30 a barrel, the economic equation begins swinging in favour of Otec stations. At \$40 a barrel the attractiveness soars because virtually all the capital costs will be paid off after eight-and-a-half years.

Most international effort has concentrated on the Otec closed-cycle system, in which a heat exchange fluid, such as ammonia, is evaporated, creating power to turn a generator, and the cold water re-



Vision of the future: an artist's impression of a factory ship, powered by electricity generated from the heat of the oceans

condenses the fluid to continue the process. Put simply, Mr Lennard says, the system mimics the domestic refrigerator in reverse.

In the Taiwanese scheme, envisaged as a seven-year test prototype which may lead to larger commercial plants, planners have opted for a shore-based plant, where the cold water intake pipe will run out from the Otec power station into the sea. Nevertheless, British engineers

envisage that floating plants, such as a 10-megawatt system devised by Otec and sited offshore, will be the way forward.

The main hurdle, however, which supporters of such systems need to overcome is the traditional scepticism of financiers towards 'new technologies'. "When the first commercial one is built, I am convinced they will snowball rapidly," Mr Lennard says.

Space spin-off helps heart checks

Centre in Houston. He needed a system that could be used repeatedly on astronauts to ensure that their hearts were working well, without exposing them to dangerous amounts of radiation.

Dr Lacey selected tantalum-178, which has a half-life of only 9.3 minutes. This is long enough to produce images, but not long enough to cause unnecessary exposure. It decays 30 times more quickly than technetium-99, an isotope normally used for such procedures.

To match the new isotope, Dr Lacey devised a new camera which is much lighter than existing ones and capable of producing better images. This uses a crossed matrix

Portable machine is cheaper and safe to use on infants

rather than crystals of sodium iodide. According to Xenos, it is five times faster and produces twice the resolution of conventional cameras while weighing only a third as much.

The Xenos system appears ideally suited to "first-pass" studies of the heart, in which the radiolabelled isotope is imaged as it reaches the heart. Existing systems do not do this very effectively, relying instead on imaging a large succession of heartbeats

and averaging, which often produces unsatisfactory test results.

The first Xenos system in the United Kingdom will be installed at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast. A group from the hospital travelled to Houston to see the system working and are now trying to raise the money to buy the hardware and set up a four-year research study of it in the hospital.

Dr Jimmy Laird, a radiologist at the hospital, lists the system's advantages. First, he says, it is genuinely portable which existing systems, weighing half a ton, are not. This means it could be used in emergency situations, to look, for example, at the heart of a patient

admitted to casualty after an apparent heart attack.

It produces a much lower radiation dose, one twentieth of conventional systems, which means that it could be used on infants, excluded from this type of diagnostic at present because their low body weight means that radiation doses are too high. Dr Laird says that the Xenos system is not capable of replacing all existing gamma cameras but that it is very promising.

Joe Dickinson, who runs Xenos's European operations from Old Trafford, Manchester, says that it will also be a lot cheaper, selling for about £90,000 against nearer £140,000 for existing systems. He is hoping to bring two into Europe during 1991; one for Belfast and another for a hospital in Gothenberg, Sweden.

NIGEL HAWKES

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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Doors open: 12.45 Press preview: 12.15
COPUS (the Committee on the Public Understanding of Science) of the Royal Society, the British Association for the Advancement of Science and the Royal Institution is hosting a day of action to celebrate the exciting variety of activities with which it is now associated, many of which have received direct support through the COPUS grant scheme for projects that aim to improve the public understanding of science. Visitors to the day will include those already involved in promoting the public understanding of science as well as those who would like to be.

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Anxious tales of love

SHORT STORIES

Hugh Barnes

FRIEND OF MY YOUTH

By Alice Munro
Chatto & Windus, £13.99
THE SIXTH DAY
By Primo Levi
Translated by Raymond Rosenthal
Michael Joseph, £13.99

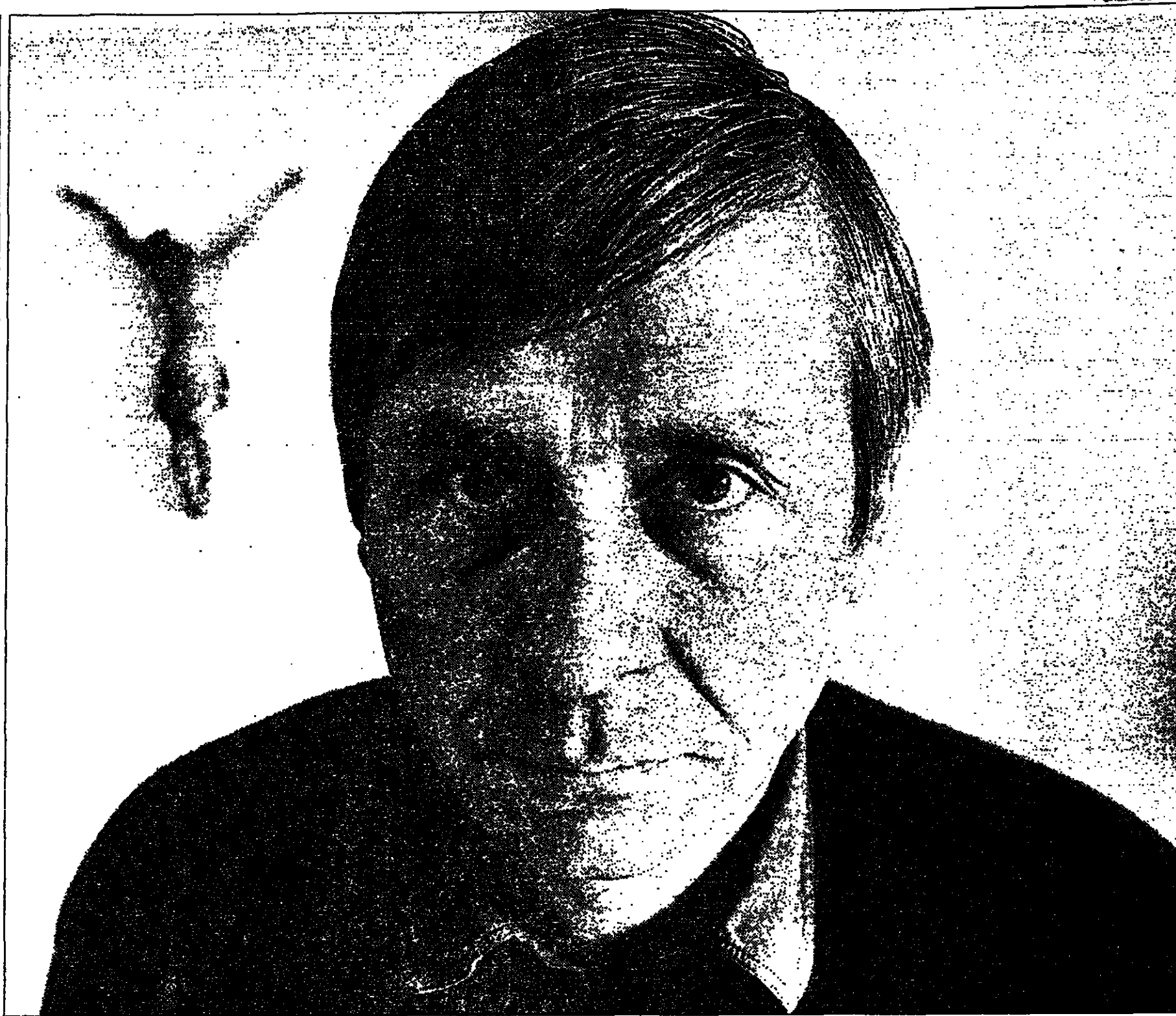
ALICE MUNRO knows how to do some things better than almost anyone else. Her stories are intimate, like private jokes or family photographs, but she describes love (for the promise of it, or the memory of it) in unfamiliar ways. Her latest collection begins and ends with a reckoning. In "Friend of My Youth" a daughter's recollection of her dead mother helps her come to terms with the past. In "Wigtime", a daughter returns to nurse her dying mother. Her hope increases for the dimly-perceived future. The practice of treating the past, and the future, as special cases of the present is widespread in Friend of My Youth. Time travel makes up for a lack of mobility elsewhere.

The stories refer to events in the Lakeside town of Walley, Ontario. Munro sifts the wreckage of the female population and turns up disappointments, aimless lives, and messy marriages. Her men are monsters of inwardness. The storytelling is less straightforward than her elegant prose makes it appear. The style is alert with anxiety and desire. Through parallels and overlaps of coincidence, she explores a pattern in the lives of unspectacular women who nurture their dreams in solitude and then, with ferocious intensity, project them onto the world.

If Munro's writing, even at its most quixotic and strange, is grounded in reality, Primo Levi addresses the corollary issue of whether estrangement can any longer be avoided. The glaring fact of Levi's life was his incarceration in Auschwitz. As a writer, turning that experience into literature, he kept his anger in check. Seldom does the reader feel that Levi is on the verge of an outburst.

The stories now translated in The Sixth Day originally appeared during the Sixties. They fall into the science fiction category, although there is nothing artificial about the horrors Levi describes. The approach to experience is as complex as anything to be found in *The Periodic Table* or *The Drowned and the Saved*. Shame, according to Levi, was the legacy of survivors. It invades the stricken landscape of *The Sixth Day*. A feeling of complicity is inescapable. He communicates a sense of pain that cannot be absorbed, given its place.

In "Psychophant" an exclusive dinner party is shocked by the conjuring up of a gadget that reveals the inner image of anybody who holds it. Gadgets take up much of *The Sixth Day*. A couple of stories, for instance, describe the Mimer, a copier that reproduces in depth, duplicating identity as well as matter. It's a pretty conceit. There is a fear in it.



Playing devil's advocate with aplomb: Piers Paul Read, raking over everything from good and evil to international politics and the needs of women

Jesus rose: or did He really?

Victoria Glendinning on a tense theological shroud-ripper: odd body in a tomb; monk hangs himself; pax vobiscum

On The Third Day He rose again from the dead. Suppose He did not — what would the implications be for individual believers, for Christianity as a whole, for world politics? And how could it be proved that the Resurrection was a lie? Only by the discovery of the human remains of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is what Piers Paul Read's new novel is about. It is a theological thriller — just the genre, if genre it be, to suit his tastes and gifts for the macabre, for moral dilemmas, historical reconstruction, and non-English settings. In 1988 Michael Dagan, a distinguished Israeli archaeologist, is asked by his son, who works for Israeli Intelligence, to examine something that has been found under the old retaining walls of what was once Herod's Temple in the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem. Bugging devices are being planted in the ancient tunnels to eavesdrop on the leaders of the Palestinian intifada; in the course of opening up the labyrinth, they have found an oil-jar containing a skeleton with a

huge crusty nail through its ankles and scratch-marks, as from thorns, on its skull.

This is creepy enough; but Father Lambert, the leading British archaeologist whom Dagan secretly summons to inspect the skeleton, is a particularly holy and charismatic monk, who after his return to London is discovered dead, hanging from the window of his cell. It is assumed by Andrew, his devoted pupil, that Lambert committed suicide on being faced with the knowledge that his whole life was wasted: for if there was no Resurrection then Jesus was not the Son of God. Suicide is a mortal sin, and the superior of the order convinces in a cover-up.

Young Andrew notices that Father Lambert's notebook is missing from his desk. Maybe the find too is a hoax: it is supported by a newly-discovered codex in Vilnius, which makes reference to the belief that the Romans stole

ON THE THIRD DAY
By Piers Paul Read
Secker & Warburg, £13.99

Jesus's body from the tomb and buried it in an oil-jar. But the codex also could be a forgery.

Dramatic incidents, as gripping as the discovery of the skeleton, or of the monk's body hanging from the window, stud the novel at strategic intervals. There is a moment of suspense so acute — when someone is about to be assassinated with a poisoned syringe in the church in London's Soho Square — that your reviewer had to put the book down and walk around the room before she could turn the page. There is a lot of sex in it too, since Andrew, released from his vow of celibacy by the discovery that Jesus was a mere man, makes ecstatic love to Dagan's daughter Anna. But at the root this is a discussion-novel.

Priests, cardinals, archaeologists, and Andrew's worldly brother Henry analyse the implications of the still-unpublished discovery in a series of seminars.

It is not always easy reading, as the scholarly arguments swing back and forth. Pontius Pilate may have hidden the body, and encouraged the idea of the Resurrection, in order to foster a mild and non-aggressive religion that could bring stability to his troubled province. The modern liberal theologians welcome the discovery, since many of them have ceased to believe literally in the Resurrection anyhow. Atheistic Henry thinks that Christian gentleness stems from "fear of life", and that religious vocations are by definition indications of psychosis. What a relief, if Jesus was just a good man and not God.

But if it is a hoax, who perpetrated it? Who gains from undermining the central tenet of Christianity? Perhaps Gorbachev,

afraid of an upsurge of religion under perestroika. Or maybe the Israelis: they have a propaganda crisis now that the supply of war criminals is running out; and American Jews will not be able to determine American policy for long because of the growing influence of Catholic Hispanics and southern Baptists.

Those who know Read's own religious position will not be amazed by the way the mystery is finally unravelled, though he plays the devil's advocate with aplomb. It is not only questions of faith, and of good and evil, that get raked over here, but patriotism, international politics, marital ethics, the needs of women, the care of children, ambition, corruption, the nature of neurosis. Much of this is tediousness, and a lot to cover in 280 pages.

But the only thing that stops *On The Third Day* from being altogether brilliant is the writing itself, which is sometimes pedestrian, or turgid, or just slack, as if Read cared so much for what he was saying that he cared too little for how he said it. Nevertheless, it's essential reading.

Stardust gets in your face-lift

Anne Barnes

HIS LITTLE WOMEN

By Judith Rossner
Sinclair-Stevenson, £13.95

QUEENDOM COME

By Ellen Galford
Virago, £4.99

THE DEVIL'S SPECTACLES

By David Alexander
Alison & Busby, £12.99

A WOMAN TO BE LOVED

By James Mitchell
Sinclair-Stevenson, £14.99



Judith Rossner in *Wonderland*

mixes self-indulgence with strength. The action takes place in Edinburgh, where Albanna, a chieftainess and Ancient Briton, suddenly appears from the realms of the dead to visit the last few years of the 20th century. All is not well in the British Isles. A highly repressive female prime minister is busy, like a bossy nanny, firming up her framework of social control. The gap between those who conform and those who do

not is being forcibly widened by the stream of penalties which pour down on the poor, the homeless, the rebellious or sexually deviant. Albanna's arrival "to save her people" provides some comic ironies mixed with force of the school down variety. Half the ingenuity, and more time to relish it, might have made the message more telling.

David Alexander works out a different sort of fantasy. In *The*

Devil's Spectacles he describes a group of people living in that part of the Scottish Highlands where many livelihoods depend on summer tourism. When the Loch Ness Monster turns out to be simply a huge slug that self-destructs when lifted from the water, it is clear that some other mystery must be found to keep the tourists coming. Fortunately, someone stumbles on deep underground caves, which only need a little painting-up in the manner of Lascaux, to be passed off as the most important archaeological find of the century.

The intricacies of the deception fascinate the author. He is shrewd in his analysis of the vanities both of archaeologists and of steadfast believers in unlikely interference from spacemen. Perhaps, in this way, it is more a journalist's account of patterns of behaviour than a novelist's account of the interplay of personalities. The formula followed in James Mitchell's *A Woman to be Loved* leaves no room for uncertainty. It is the story of a girl's recovery from her experiences as an ambulance driver in the Great War, and the sadness of her adjustment to an empty life afterwards. However, she is beautiful, slim, intelligent and caring, so she escapes from her narrow-minded mother, seizes her independence, does good in the world, and becomes a celebrity. It may be the stuff dreams are made of. It is the stuff that television serials are made of. But it is a dry stick of a novel.

After Booker hype, wheels of Mammon

Nicola Murphy

AT THE Booker dinner Sir Denis Forman, the chairman of the judges, sent out a prayer to "the only effective deity working in the world of Thatcher". "Please, oh Mammon," he begged, "make market forces work to the benefit of the novel." By yesterday morning Mammon wheels were already in motion at A. S. Byatt's publisher, Chatto & Windus, to ensure that, in addition to the original run of 29,000 copies, 50,000 reprints

would arrive tomorrow. Foreign rights have been widely sold, and next week sees the launch of the American edition, and a nice New York Times review.

Meanwhile that some Wednesday morning, Hatchards might have pondered whether Chatto weren't a little premature in their orders. John McGahern's *Amongst Women* and Beryl Bainbridge's *In A World of Big Adventure* were selling better than the winning novel, Terry Malher, chairman of Pentos, was more

confident about *Possession*'s prospects: "In the next few weeks Dillons will sell all of their 2,000-3,000 stock." Most of the public, in fact, will be waiting for the paperback, which is scheduled for publication early next year. "Winning the Booker means a dramatic increase in the print run," said Frances Coady from Vintage, the paperback imprint. "It would have been 70,000, now we're looking at 150,000. And of course we're absolutely thrilled for the book itself."

"I'm very fond of *Possession*, said the author. "But I feel a long way away from it, as the book went to the publishers a year and a half ago. Now I have a terrible need to make things go back to normal." As for winning the Booker, she was perhaps most delighted to receive a telephone call from Iris Murdoch who "so hates the phone". And Wednesday afternoon Antonia Byatt still hadn't got around to putting the £20,000 cheque in the bank. Money just wasn't on her mind.

Heroine sleuth on job

CRIME

Marcel Berlins

POSTMORTEM

By Patricia Daniels Cornwell
Macdonald, £12.95

THE supply of excellent American women crime writers with strong sleuth-heroines seems inexhaustible. Cornwell's character is Dr Kay Scarpetta, chief medical officer of the state of Virginia. There is a series of sadistic killings of young women in their own bedrooms, with nothing to link the victims. Scarpetta's job — her accession to which dismayed local male networks — is on the line if she doesn't produce a result. Her research is tampered with, the suspects include her own about-to-be lover, and the chief cop is a red-necked misogynist. Terrific first novel, full of suspense, in which even the scientific bits grip.

● *Kaddish in Dublin*, by John Brady (*Constable*, £12.95). Dublin Garda's Inspector Matt Minogue, masking his cultured poetry-loving sensitivity with a bog-Irish facade ("Why ruin a good stereotype?" he remarks), hunts the executioner of Jewish Supreme Court judge's journalist son. Palestinian motives look most likely, then another death raises the possibility of sinister Catholic involvement, reaching the inner recesses of Irish political life. Brady's best: informed, subtle, and intelligent, with Minogue revealing a hitherto unseen depth of soul, humour, and emotion.

● *Trial by Fire*, by Frances Fyfield (*Heinemann*, £12.95). Soulless Essex commuter village hosts plethora of lurking evil, culminating in the finding of a woman's body in the woods, viciously bludgeoned and stabbed. Superintendent Bailey leads the enquiry; his unlikely collaborator, Crown Prosecutor Helen West, disbelieving the obvious evidence, becomes a reluctant snapper, putting their relationship, and herself, at risk. The cast, exceptionally well drawn, includes a simple-minded sexually advanced thief, a manipulative, precocious schoolgirl, and a randy English teacher. Many chilling moments lead to superb, unexpected climax.

● *The Becker Factor*, by Michael David Anthony (*Collins*, £11.95). The Becker is Thomas, and a newly unearthed coffin might contain his remains — which could awaken religious controversy, just when a new Archbishop of Canterbury is about to be chosen. An elderly Canon dies in suspicious circumstances, and Richard Harrison, formerly of British Intelligence, now diocesan (disappointingly, officer) finds himself in the centre of splendid mix of the ecclesiastical, homicidal, political, and espionage: impressive first novel.

● *Mayhem in Parva*, by Nancy Livingston (*Gollancz*, £12.95). Mr Pringle, tax inspector (retired), visits his roots at Wuffinge Parva. A runaway hearse bashes into his car, he stumbles on village worthy Doris, bumped off and wearing a woollen hat with an Aztec pattern belonging to village nuisance Miranda. The body vanishes. Among many other ingredients: suspicious Saxon wall paintings, mysterious Swedish honey-mooners, and a "frogs have rights" campaign. Livingston's characters inhabit a uniquely surreal, lurid world of criminality. Her oddball humour is not to everyone's taste. But on form, no one can pack so many laugh-out-louds into one book.

● *Vengeance*, by Max Marquis (*Macmillan*, £11.95). Axe in OC's head, crossbow in courier's policeman, ginned down. Inspector Harry Timberlake seeks hidden links between apparently random events; tries to prevent continuation of sequence, while coping with ambivalent emotions over competing love affairs. Formula well-handled, climax paced.

● *The Dead Do Not Praise*, by Pauline Bell (*Macmillan*, £11.60). Comfortably old-fashioned past-tense asking traditional whodunit question: who did for the unpopular headmistress in her study? Her apparently spinsterish victim had sexy underwear: there's an assortment of variously motivated suspects, and sound school atmosphere of the comprehensive rather than public kind. Good debut, but Bell must contain her penchant for caricature. Frenchmen, and working-class characters who drop initial aitches and final gees.

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ARTS

BRIEFING

French weave

THE French have walked off with the 1990 European Museum of the Year Award. It goes to the Ecomuseum in Fourmies, an old textile manufacturing town near the Luxembourg border. The Ecomuseum, which has one of the largest collections of working textile machinery in the world, wins a cash prize and a small Henry Moore sculpture. Museums which have just opened, or have been reorganised within the last two years, were eligible. Of seven considered "outstanding" among the 34 candidates this year, two were British: the National Waterways Museum, Gloucester, and the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford.

Not a prayer

THESE are tough days for the top Asian-music promoter, Jay Viva-Dev. First he heard that Greater London Arts was not giving him a grant for his current season of Indian classical concerts, including such leading musicians as Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan. Later on the same day his main sponsor — the listless magazine *City Limits* — went into receivership. Now he is engaged in a theological dispute with the Central Hall, Westminster, regarding a concert by the Pakistani devotional singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Apparently, the promoter of sacred music is proscribed within the Central Hall, unless the devotion is addressed to the correct deity.

Chair leader

MORE news seeps out of Oxford about the imminent appointment of Ian McKellen as the next visiting professor of drama. The playwright Arthur Miller was apparently up under consideration for the year-long appointment, stanced by the impresario Cameron Mackintosh. But as when Sondheim was the professor, it was felt that "second should be British." McKellen and the playwright Willy Russell were the contenders. McKellen, of all se, is a Cambridge man.



Ian McKellen: Oxford bound

Last chance... The *Edwardians* and *After* offers a rare opportunity to see a selection of some of the finest sculptures and paintings assembled from the Royal Academy's own collection spanning the period 1900 to 1940 (and selected by Royal Academician Lawrence Gowing). Much of the work, submitted by Academy members to represent the way in which they wished to be seen by posterity, will be put back into storage when the exhibition closes on Sunday (071-439 7438).

CINEMA; NEW RELEASES

Too much like hard work

Geoff Brown on *Bird on a Wire*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Match Factory Girl* and a Japanese season including *The Enchantment*. David Robinson on *Silent Scream* and *Salute of the Jugger*

Trying to entertain an audience can be back-breaking work. In *Bird on a Wire* (Plaza, 12), the filmmakers hurl male pin-up Mel Gibson and the perennially cute Goldie Hawn through a barrage of death-defying chases, serial jaunts, and explosions. At the end, Gibson and the baddies battle for survival in a well-stocked zoo, dodging bullets and the malevolent intentions of six tigers, four alligators, a shoal of piranhas, and one baboon. Around 200 artists and technicians slaved behind the screen, headed by the director John Badham; 17 stuntmen risked their lives to thrill us. All this plus 25 parrots.

Yet their mountain of effort has only produced one of the worst cinematic molehills for some time. Even action extravaganzas need a decent story; *Bird on a Wire* offers just the skeleton of a yarn about a protected court witness (Gibson) on the run from the drug dealer he helped put behind bars. To make matters chancier, his college girlfriend — now a hot-shot New York lawyer — crosses his path at a Detroit petrol station at the exact moment when the avenging villain finds his prey. The old acquaintances begin their nightmare ride as sparring partners; they end, of course, with flames rekindled.

The film equally fails as a star vehicle. Gibson displays his usual attributes — blue eyes, gravel voice, a manly chest — but cannot put flesh on his anorexic character. Goldie Hawn wears the years

Hurled through a barrage: Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn in *Bird on a Wire*

well, but wastes her energies on a demeaning role: whenever physical calamity threatens, this smart corporate lawyer screams "Oh my God!"

Noise plays an important part throughout: squealing tyres, raging animals, blumping music. But the ultimate noise is of a hollow, top-heavy Hollywood concoction crashing ignominiously to the ground.

A feature-length cartoon requires even more labour than any live-action frolic. The *Little Mermaid* (Warner West End, Odeon Marble Arch, U) employed nearly 600 people, beavering away for three years to turn Hans Christian Andersen's tale into a Disney film fit to stand alongside *Snow White* and *The Seven Dwarfs*. *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*. There has not been a new Disney fairy-tale for 30 years.

Employees spent a good deal of time looking over their shoulders at the past. Ariel the mermaid boasts the familiar large, cute eyes; another Disney trademark, trails of twinkling dust, has been simply

replaced by twinkling bubbles, dancing round the underwater creatures. The tale's Prince Charming — Prince Eric, in fact — is as bland as his forbear; while the seawitch, Ursula, seems a compendium of villainesses, particularly Maleficent from *Sleeping Beauty*.

Yet this is no archaic revival. The directors, John Musker and Ron Clements, maintain a nervous pace geared to the short attention span of today's young viewers; while the Oscar-winning score by Alan Menken dribbles fashionably over the ears. Only the Caribbean-flavoured number "Under the Sea" has the force of character to seep inside one's memory. *The Little Mermaid* is bright and busy enough to keep children amused; but sterner adults may find the old fairy-tale magic squeezed out by the film's synthetic mixture of styles.

Perhaps the week's most striking film, *The Match Factory Girl* (Electric Portobello Road, 15), was made with a fraction of Disney's work-

force. The same man — Aki Kaurismäki — wrote, directed, and edited, stamping his unique perspective on life over every frame. The Finnish wonderboy's last creation, *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*, was a silly indulgence; this film, by contrast, lodges in the mind with a bullet's force.

His heroine is a match factory drudge, trod upon both at work and home, where she lives — mostly in silence — with her mother and stepfather. A night out means a dejected dance hall, the *Laundrette*, or a bad Marx Brothers movie (she cries). She believes she has found her own Prince Charming, but the man abuses her like everybody else. The worm finally turns, and buys rat poison.

Kaurismäki's declared aim was to make a film bleak and cryptic enough to make the austere French director Robert Bresson seem positively profligate. He succeeds, though not at the expense of audience interest: black, sly

humour pokes through many of the domestic scenes, and Kati Outinen's plaintive looks irradiate a character who could easily seem a dull, dreadful doormat.

This is far more than an exercise in style: Kaurismäki digs away at his critique of Finnish society, while his characters are caught in their usual desperate dance of thwarted desires, betrayal and death. *The Match Factory Girl* is a bracing experience.

The *Enchantment* opens a three-week season at the ICA devoted to "Young Japanese Cinema". In plot terms, Shunichi Nagasaki's film is actually on the old side: Forties Hollywood knew all about split personalities, susceptible psychiatrists and dotting secretaries.

Lesbian relationships provide a new ingredient, though Nagasaki's dawdling manner and low-budget Tokyo settings never engender the hot-house atmosphere the characters' actions invite.

GEOFF BROWN

Compelling portrait of a tragic prisoner

Winner of the Michael Powell Award for Best British Film at this year's Edinburgh Film Festival, *Silent Scream* (15, Metro 1), is an ambitious first film by the stage director and actor, David Hayman. Co-produced by Channel 4, the British Film Institute and the Scottish Film Production Fund, it confirms the emergence of an authentic Scottish school of film making.

The script is by Bill Beech, who met the protagonist of this real-life story when working as an art student, with the inmates of the special prison unit at Barlinnie. Larry Winters had shown signs of mental instability and violent tendencies as a child. The Parachute Regiment did not help; and at 21 he was sentenced to life for murdering a barman.

Both in Inverness Prison and Barlinnie — an experiment in alternative, democratic treatment of prisoners — he veered between depression and extreme aggression. Massive doses of prescribed sedatives, along with illicit drugs, led to addiction and death from overdose, at 34. In prison Winters produced a remarkable series of self-analytical poems and stories; and Bill Beech actually discussed with him the possibility of a film biography.

Larry's story and personality are explored in the random impressions of his final drug delirium. The plan is confused, though, by framing it within the story of his mother's last visit to the prison on the day of his death. Recurrent scenes in the prison video control room, and a

device of having Larry's fantasies invade the monitors there, add further complications.

The memories pass freely back and forth between childhood in Glasgow and rural Cardisland, school, holiday outings, the army, 13 years of prison experiences, a memorable day's return home on parole. Often we rely on the state of Larry's ever-changing hair and beard to indicate time and place. There are additional interpolations of animated drawings, originally made by Bill Beech to illustrate Larry's poems.

Continuity is provided by Iain Glen's compelling performance. Even if the fragmentary form of the script never allows him or the viewer to penetrate far into Winters' personality, he is a fascinating, tragic figure — attractive,

articulate, alternately gentle and vicious, bewildered by his own violence.

But there is an obligation in this kind of real-life story to provide a modicum of information. Here information often seems sacrificed to self-conscious artistry, frustrating what we would like or need to know about the character. We learn little about the physical circumstances of the childhood, or of the relationships, even with his mother, of this remote and enigmatic figure.

The *Salute of the Jugger* (18, Cannon Panion Street, Scala King's Cross, ICA Cinema) is even more enigmatic. Filmed in Australia, this minimalist future-fantasy was directed and scripted by David Peoples, writer (or re-writer) of *Leviathan*, *L.A. Hawk*, *Predator* and *Blade Runner*.

In a devastated future, the only distraction amidst the desperate struggle for survival is The Game, a form of team combat whose rules are elusive except that the prize is a dog's skull. The film follows the fortunes and ultimate victory of one of the wandering teams of "Juggers" who compete in the League. The team stars are Rutger Hauer and new recruit Joan Chen (from *The Last Emperor*).

The dialogue is impenetrably cryptic, and thrown away in asides. At least, however, the story seems to have no metaphoric pretensions, unless in respect of David Peoples' reported ambition, "I've always wanted to write a pro-football story."

DAVID ROBINSON

DANCE

Hill climbing

A new American recruit strengthens the lineup of principal dancers for the Royal Ballet, as Debra Craine reports

Ballet directors dream about a tall, dark and handsome male dancer with long, elegant limbs, an aristocratic bearing and a polished technique. Anthony Dowell has just found one.

Today the Royal Ballet director will announce the signing, effective January 1, of American Robert Hill as a principal artist, an obvious successor to Jonathan Cope who retired last season as the company's leading male dancer. Hill's signing follows this summer's coup — the luring of Irek Mukhamedov from the Bolshoi — and gives Dowell two contrasting performers who, between them, could embrace all aspects of the repertoire.

The announcement will probably provoke the kind of xenophobic sentiment that questions the need to bring yet more foreigners into Britain's biggest ballet company. Some of the company's own male dancers will undoubtedly feel further frustrated as they watch their already limited opportunities for performance diminish with every passing guest artist. But this latest hiring will provide Dowell with what he desperately needs: a reliable partner with enough presence and stature to complement the company's taller women.

Whereas Mukhamedov has the fiery grandeur of an over-the-top Russian on stage, Hill is ballet's equivalent of the Hollywood leading man — sophisticated and romantic. The American's style, with its attention to detail and line, is compatible with the Royal's own, while his warm and spontaneous dramatic approach is refreshing. But he has yet to prove if he can match Mukhamedov's thrilling athletic magnetism.

At six-foot-one, with a strong lean build, the 29-year-old Hill was born to be a ballet prince, albeit a reluctant one. "Because of my physique, yes I am a prince, but that's not me inside. I have a lot more passion than these two-dimensional characters who don't give me enough range of expression. Physically they are not as rewarding as something more contemporary."

And the fact that being a prince is his stock in trade on the international guest artist circuit? "It is ironic, but business is business and you have to do certain things to enable you to do what you want." With the Royal he will continue to dance the traditional repertoire but wants to work with choreographers on contemporary ballets which are "a lot more off balance, not so rigid as the classical vocabulary."

Hill, a high school gymnast, started ballet training at the late age of 17 in Florida, where he grew up. Remarkably, only four years later, Mikhail Baryshnikov invited him to join American Ballet Theatre. He stayed six years, then, unhappy with what he saw as a negative atmosphere under Baryshnikov's directorship, left ABT for a brief stint with New York City Ballet before launching himself in 1988 as a guest artist.

"Every company needs a tall male dancer," he says, dismissing his own success on the circuit as "being tall is 99 per cent of it, talent is one per cent." Despite joining the Royal on a permanent basis next year, Hill hopes his career as an occasional visiting artist with other companies will continue. "There's a lot of work out there but a lot of it is not really interesting. A lot like *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* — is fortifying and I decided to be more selective."

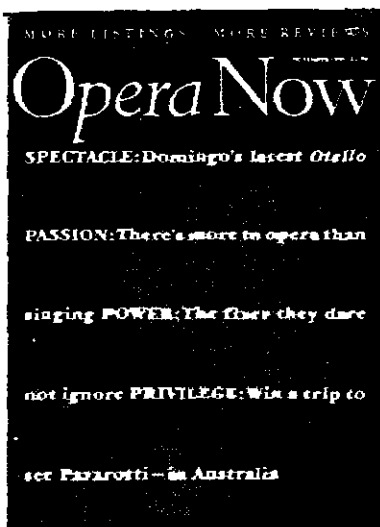
Tomorrow night he will partner rising star Darcey Bussell in the season's opener, *Prince of the Pagodas*. Next year his partners will include Sylvie Guillem and Alina Astasurava. "It's very exciting for me to be in the Royal. This is a very reputable company and it says a lot in this business to be part of it."

His American expansiveness will set him apart from his colleagues, who tend to be more economical with their body language. "The British don't use the stage in the same way, they tend to cut underneath themselves. I know I move, I cover space. I know I have with my dancing people will see that things can be done differently and still with validity."



Darcey Bussell partnered by Robert Hill in rehearsal

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Major will stand firm against a single EC currency

By Philip Webster
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

STRONG opposition to the imposition of a single European currency will be emphasised by John Major in his Mansion House speech tonight.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is planning to use the occasion to give his first detailed explanation of how he intends British monetary and fiscal policy to be conducted within the European exchange-rate mechanism. He is expected to restate the need for a tight fiscal policy.

Mr Major's resistance to a single currency will be voiced against the background of fears within the Conservative party that ERM entry could lead inexorably to the latter stages of the Delors vision for the development of the European Community. This week his parliamentary private secretary, Tony Favell, resigned to give himself freedom to speak out on Europe.

At the same time the Labour leadership is increasing its support for growing economic integration within the Community.

Despite the opposition of a substantial number of backbench MPs, Neil Kinnock is preparing to commit Labour to a stance of building on the operation of the single market and of ERM. He is stopping short of committing Labour to support for a single currency at this stage, but that option is not ruled out for the future.

Before next week's Commons debate on the ERM, in which Mr Kinnock plans to speak, the Labour leadership line is that it would be premature to commit itself irrevocably to a single currency. Before considering such a step it would need to be satisfied that the economy had strengthened and reached a level of performance comparable with other member states. Any European central bank would have to be democratically and politically accountable.

Despite the cautious formula Mr Kinnock clearly intends to portray Labour as more enthusiastic and positive about the latter stages of monetary policy than is the government.

Mr Major, in his first Mansion House speech, will back the evolutionary approach to European economic development and again promote his plan for a hard Ecu, a common currency linked to the strongest currency in the EC.

Meanwhile there were signs yesterday that the toughest spending round for a decade was moving to a conclusion. Only John MacGregor, the embattled education secretary, was last night holding out for more cash in his talks with Norman Lamont, the chief secretary to the Treasury.

Yesterday there was said to be a large gap remaining between the £700m extra being sought by Mr MacGregor and what Mr Lamont was prepared to give him.



Sky-walking: Andre Gonzalez, on pogo stick, and Dimitri Bogatirov, on crutches, taking the air on top of the Hackney Empire theatre in east London, where they will be performing as part of the Moscow Lights Clown Company from tonight until Sunday

Ukraine strike forces premier to resign

From Nick Worrall in Kiev

STUDENTS on hunger strike in Kiev scored their first major victory of their two week campaign against the Ukraine's Communist-ruled government yesterday when President Leonid Kravchuk announced that his prime minister Vitali Masol had decided to resign. The decision still has to be ratified by the republican parliament.

The announcement, relayed five over loudspeakers from the parliament, provoked a storm of noisy celebration in the untidy tented camp that the students have set up in a central city square under the shadow of a massive red granite statue of Lenin, the Communist Party's founder.

At the same time at least three separate groups of marchers were moving through the streets of Kiev, the Soviet Union's third largest city. Waving flags and chanting anti-government slogans, they included large numbers of people too old to be students as more and more workers add support to the hunger strikers.

The protest began on October 2 inspired by students from Kiev's two universities and from the militant western Ukrainian city, Lvov. Since then numbers have risen as other workers have joined the protest. Letters of support and cash donations have come in from all over Ukraine.

Demands include new elections under a multi-party system; a new

constitution reflecting resolutions passed by parliament in July for greater sovereignty; a Ukrainian currency and local armed forces; rejection of President Gorbachev's proposed new union treaty; and placing the considerable property of the Communist Party into public hands. There have been no official moves to end the sit-in which looks likely to spread after yesterday's boost to student hopes.

Kiev tension, page 13
Leading article, page 15

Shake-up to end legal aid income trap

Continued from page 1

Courts. At the same time, some of the perceived injustices of the scheme, such as the rule by which the legally-aided litigant who loses does not have to pay his opponent's costs, is likely to be abolished. Instead, legally-aided litigants - who in future might be significantly better off than legal aid litigants are now - could well have to pay towards a winner's costs, according to their means.

The reforms are part of a three-year review which is expected to report with its first tranche of proposals in March. Although set up amid concern at the Bar and

Law Society about the falling numbers of people eligible for legal aid, the review goes far wider than publicly-funded legal services. Officials are keen to drive down costs of litigation generally, both legally-aided and private. There is concern about the inexorable rise in lawyers' private fees, creating a growing gap where more and more people cannot afford to go to law and cannot obtain legal aid.

There have been recent warnings from the lord chancellor that legal aid, now costing a gross £716 million a year, could not be a "blank cheque" from the taxpayer. At the same time he urged lawyers to curb costs, promoting fears within the profession that the Treasury is seeking to cap the scheme. Officials plan therefore to tie the overhaul of legal aid in with other reforms now under way to the civil courts and to family law and procedure with the aim of making litigation generally more affordable and efficient.

They are considering scrapping the whole basis of across-the-board financial eligibility that underpins the legal aid scheme. Instead of giving legal aid on the basis of a person's financial means, officials are looking at how legal aid can be targeted so there would be flexible eligibility tests according to the kind of case and its costs. There may also be a new legal aid "safety net" system. The review team is also looking at the present system of contributions.

Political sketch

Backbench aid for an Hon friend opposite

YESTERDAY, describing the swearing-in of a new Labour MP from Merseyside, I declared him the victor of the Bootle by-election. Bootle has yet to be fought. Nobody knows which party will win there, but one man who will not be a candidate is Eddie O'Hara, who has just become the MP for Knowsley South. I apologise to him.

And it was Merseyside which yesterday prompted a rare and pleasing parliamentary spectacle: that of a backbencher from one party coming to the aid of a backbencher from another, in real good faith.

Labour's Frank Field had applied to Mr Speaker "under standing order 20" for an emergency debate on the proposed offer for sale of the Cammell Laird shipyard in his constituency of Birkenhead.

If no buyer could be found, argued Field, the resultant closure would be disastrous for his many constituents working there. Parliament, he concluded, should have the opportunity to say "that it would not lightly countenance that asset, and those people," being cast aside.

The list of issues which matter urgently to one or another of our 650 MPs is a potentially endless one: so Mr Speaker's painful duty is usually to turn down such requests without offering reasons. He did so in this case. That was predictable, but Mr Field looked genuinely distressed.

It was then that Nicholas Soames (C, Crawley) rose, "on a point of order".

The thrust of Mr Field's constituents' fears, said Soames, was surely enormously worrying. If a constituency problem like this was not a good enough reason for an emergency debate, then "what scale and magnitude of distress does there have to be" for the request to be granted?

There was little Mr Speaker could add, of course. He explained that "urgency" counted for much. But he clearly approved of Mr Soames' intervention, as did everyone (I think) in the chamber.

Birkenhead is not a prosperous town, whereas Crawley is a wealthy. Mr Field is not a fat man, whereas Soames is substan-

tial but both are thought intelligent and independent by their colleagues. Birkenhead (for its member) nodded appreciatively in the direction of Crawley. Crawley smiled back.

Rare good humour. And short-lived. The next point of order was from Mr R Hughes MP. To that name answers Robert (C, Harrow W), but also Roy (Lab, Newport E) and Bob (Lab, Aberdeen N). Confusion is inevitable.

The confusion this time had resulted in Robert, from Harrow finding his name attached to what he considered an anti-Israeli motion which it had possibly been the intention of Roy from Newport or of Aberdeen Bob to support.

Mr Speaker explained this, rather wearily. But Robert was clearly cross. Funny, that, because I thought I remembered irritation surfacing some years ago, when Robert found some correspondence of Bob's included by mistake in his mail; and quoted it in the chamber.

On that occasion (I thought) it was Bob who was cross. But I've spoken to Robert's secretary, who says it was Bob who found something intended for Robert, and had the thing read out from the front bench by Jack. For, on the whole, keeps out of all this. Hands up everyone who wishes they would just toss a coin for the initial "R", and find other names for the remaining two?

Anyway, confusions about the MP's name served me well during my years as member for West Derbyshire. After parliament's first debate on capital punishment, I went into the division lobbies, as did Mr Parry, the Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside.

Next morning, the *Official Record*, together with *The Times*, included my name in both the Aye and the No division lists. Mr Parry was recorded as not having voted. Many of my constituents (seeking my name in the list of which they approved, and finding it) were kind enough to write congratulating me.

I never did get round to setting the record straight in the local press. After all, an MP is a very busy person.

MATTHEW PARRIS

School tests to change

Continued from page 1

disastrous pilot series of tests last spring. The prime minister made clear to him that he needed to be convinced that the revised format was in line with her original intentions, of improving basic standards in all state schools.

Mr MacGregor's cabinet future is not in doubt and the meeting was not intended to put pressure on him to settle his bid for an extra £700 million on his £6.8 billion budget plan for next year. There was no general disagreement between the prime minister and her education secretary, Downing Street sources said.

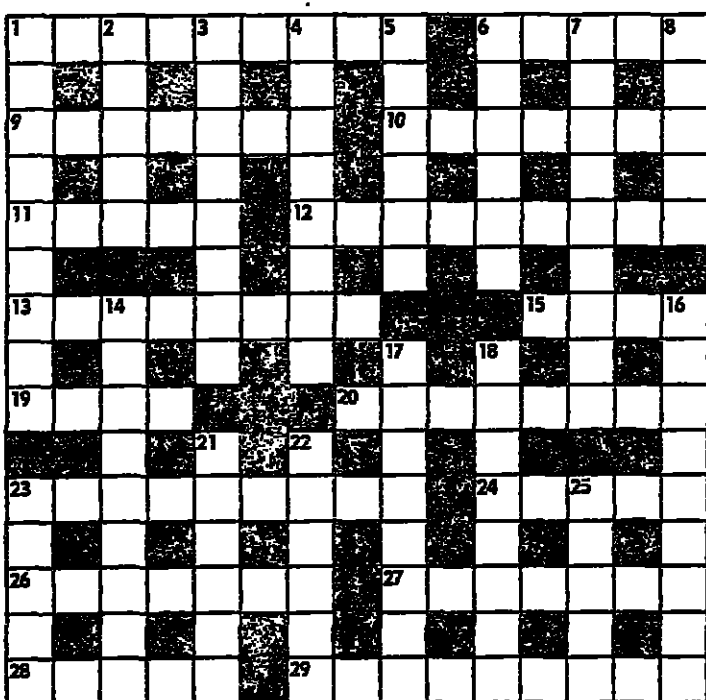
Even so, the impression persisted that Mrs Thatcher and her

closest supporters have their reservations about the style and pace of Mr MacGregor's attempts to implement the radical reforms bequeathed to him by his predecessor, Kenneth Baker.

Mr MacGregor insisted that his encounter was a "routine meeting", but government sources conceded it was not a "regular thing" for her to hold such wide-ranging talks with a minister.

The tensions surrounding the talks were heightened by disagreements among Conservative MPs about educational vouchers and by the disclosure that Mr MacGregor is now the only cabinet minister who has not settled his spending battle with the Treasury.

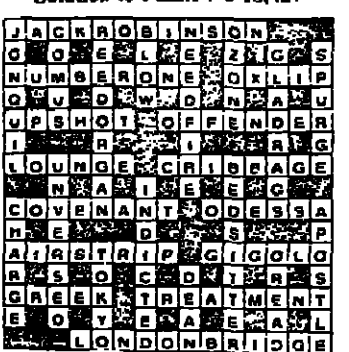
THE TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO 18,428



ACROSS

- 1 In a state of stupor, pet needs a restorative (9).
- 6 Backchat by workers in plant (5).
- 9 Part of an atomic ring rescued from Uncle No (7).
- 10 Baby - a royal one causing jealousy (7).
- 11 Why don't we say we're Soviet citizens? (5).
- 12 See show free of charge (9).
- 13 Shrub has a protective pad round the bark (8).
- 15 Quiver silver bird (4).
- 19 God of Peace? (4).
- 20 In which we hear Gilbert's words of resignation (8).
- 23 The last dregs of an unpalatable pint? (6,3).
- 24 Square account of dead man's life in holy book (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 18,427



DOWN

- 2 Zealot produces cant, it a revolutionary (7).
- 27 House on island is too big to be kept up (7).
- 28 In trifle, divine alcohol (5).
- 29 Before the middle of Test, teams get refreshments (9).
- 1 Miraculous place rented by artist (9).
- 2 Historian, no longer with us, is taken for granted (5).
- 3 Use right rate to convert gold, say (8).
- 4 A sad disappointment nobody gets an opening (3,5).
- 5 Crack and show emotion about girl (6).
- 6 Muddy track dug up with a couple of spades, maybe (6).
- 7 Priest - beholds - Solomon's answer - what a monster (4).
- 8 Vegetable, sounds like beer (5).
- 14 No sediment when disturbed is wet (9).
- 16 It's thrust on some people, read Malvolto, the bighead (4).
- 17 Generous applause given to a few people (8).
- 18 Drink with the power to provide amusement (3,5).
- 21 Information to put in the dock, the squire's family (6).
- 22 Sick to the grass (6).
- 23 Suit - it takes a few weeks to come up with it (5).
- 25 Brooke's said to be a poet (5).

Concise crossword, page 17

WORD-WATCHING

A daily safari through the language jungle. Which of the possible definitions is correct?

By Philip Howard

- VALLECUA**
a. A red pimple
b. A little valley
c. A Serbo-Croat punctuation mark
- MOUCHARABY**
a. A North African balcony
b. Arabian fl.
c. The female tarboosh
- GILLAROO**
a. An Australian sheep herdsman
b. An Irish trout
c. A yearling kangaroo
- INENUBILABLE**
a. Very foggy
b. Unmarriageable
c. Unaccountable

Answers on page 24

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24-hours a day, dial 0636 401 followed by the appropriate code.

- London & SE traffic, roadworks**
C. London (w/m/n & S. Circs.) 731
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M-ways/roads Dartford T-M23 734
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M25 London Orbital only 736
- National traffic and roadworks**
National motorways 737
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Midlands 740
East Anglia 741
North-west England 742
North-east England 743
Scotland 744
Northern Ireland 745
- AA Roadwatch is charged at 33p per minute (cheap rate) and 44p per minute at all other times.**

WEATHER

England and Wales will start generally grey and misty, brightening in the South-East with some sunshine. Showers will develop which may be heavy and thundery. Wales, western England and Northern Ireland will stay mostly cloudy with occasional rain. Northeast England and eastern Scotland will be dull and windy with outbreaks of heavy rain. Dry and brighter in northern Scotland. Outlook: cloudy with showers or longer spells of rain.

ABROAD

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Rain
Algeria	22	10	10	0
Amman	20	10	10	0
Algiers	20	10	10	0
Antwerp	13	10	10	0
Athens	13	10	10	0
Batavia	23	10	10	0
Bombay	23	10	10	0
Buenos Aires	22	10	10	0
Calcutta	23	10	10	0
Cairo	18	10	10	0
Cardiff	13	10	10	0
Cebu	23	10	10	0
Dhaka	23	10	10	0
Dublin	13	10	10	0
Edinburgh	13	10	10	0
Geneva	13	10	10	0
Hong Kong	23	10	10	0
London	13	10	10	0
Lyons	13	10	10	0
Madrid	13	10	10	0
Manila	23	10	10	0
Medan	23	10	10	0
Moscow	13	10	10	0
Paris	13	10	10	0
Perth	13	10	10	0
Rangoon	23	10	10	0
Reykjavik	13	10	10	0
Rome	13	10	10	0
Singapore	23	10	10	0
Sourabaya	23	10	10	0
Taipei	23	10	10	0
Tokyo	13	10	10	0
Yokohama	13	10	10	0

AROUND BRITAIN

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Rain
Cardiff	13	10	10	0
Edinburgh	13	10	10	0
London	13	10	10	0
Manchester	13	10	10	0
Newcastle	13	10	10	0
Nottingham	13	10	10	0
Sheffield	13	10	10	0
Sunderland	13	10	10	0
Wolverhampton	13	10	10	0
Wrexham	13	10	10	0

LONDON

Yesterday: Temp: max 8 am to 6 pm, 18C (64F); min 6 pm to 8 am, 12C (54F). Rain: 5 pm to 6 pm, 0.3 hrs. Bar: mean sea level, 6 pm, 1,005.5 mbars. Wind: 1,000 mbars - 25.5 km/h.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Poole, Dorset, 20C (68F). Lowest day temp: Cape Wrath, Highlands, 11C (52F). Highest rainfall: Edinburgh, East Sussex, 0.08 in. Highest sunshine: Southsea, Hampshire, 5.8 hr.

MANCHESTER

Yesterday: Temp: max 8 am to 6 pm, 17C (63F); min 6 pm to 8 am, 10C (50F). Rain: 24 hr to 6 pm, 0.05 in. Sun: 24 hr to 6 pm, 0.5 hr.

GLASGOW

Yesterday: Temp: max 6 am to 6 pm, 12C (54F); min 6 pm to 8 am, 6C (43F). Rain: 24 hr to 6 pm, 0.23 in. Sun: 24 hr to 6 pm, nil.

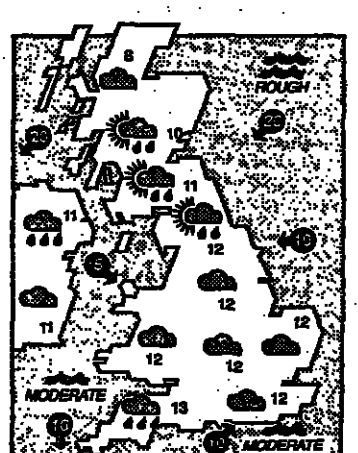
TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0696 500 followed by the appropriate code.

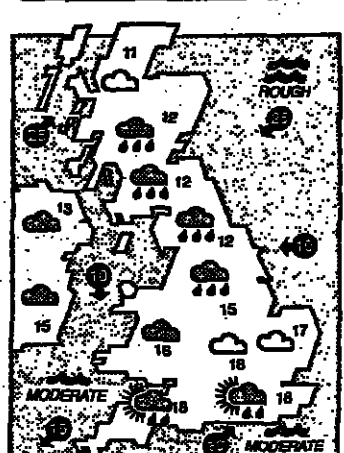
- Greater London** 701
Kent, Surrey, Sussex 702
Dorset, Hampshire & IOW 703
Devon & Cornwall 704
Wales, Gloucestershire, Somerset 705
Berkshire, Bucks, Oxon 706
Beds, Herts & Essex 707
Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambs 708
West Mid & Sh. Glam & Gwent 709
Shrops, Herefords & Worcs 710
Central Midlands 711
East Midlands 712
Leics & Notts 713
Dyfed & Pembrok 714
Gwynedd & Chyrd 715
N.W. England 716
W & S. Yorks & Dales 717
N.E. England 718
Cumbria & Lake District 719
S.W. Scotland 720
W. Central Scotland 721
E. S. Fife, Lothian & Borders 722
S. Central Scotland 723
Glasgow & E. Highlands 724
N.W. Scotland 725
Cumbria, Orkney & Shetland 727
N. Ireland 727

Weathercall is charged at 33p per minute (cheap rate) and 44p per minute at all other times.

AM



PM



LIGHTING-UP TIME

London 6.02 pm to 7.21 am
Bristol 6.12 pm to 7.41 am
Edinburgh 6.09 pm to 7.52 am
Manchester 6.07 pm to 7.43 am
Perthshire 6.26 pm to 7.50 am

YESTERDAY

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Rain
Belfast	13	55F	10	0
Birmingham	16	61F	10	0
Bristol	16	61F	10	0
Cardiff	14	57F	10	0
Edinburgh	11	52F	10	0
Glasgow	11	52F	10	0

HIGH TIDES

City	Time	Height
London Bridge	2.34	7.2
Aberdeen	1.26	7.2
Aberystwyth	7.49	13.0
Belfast	11.42	3.2
Bristol	12.1	7.4
Cardiff	6.23	6.4
Dover	11.37	6.6
Edinburgh	5.53	6.7
Glasgow	12.58	4.8
Harwich	12.12	4.8
Holyhead	10.20	5.4
Humberside	8.40	7.4
King's Lynn	6.27	6.6
Leith	3.02	5.5

NOON TODAY

Information supplied by the Met Office

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● BUSINESS AND FINANCE 27-33
● LAW 31
● SPORT 36-40

Executive Editor
David Brewerton

BUSINESS

THURSDAY OCTOBER 18 1990

Kleinwort faces halved profits after £30m loss on one deal

By JOHN BELL, CITY EDITOR

KLEINWORT Benson, the leading City merchant banking house, has taken a £30 million loss on a single share trade. The decision will cut the group's expected profits by half this year.

Though Kleinwort says that the initial decision to go ahead with the share deal was a collective one, Charles Hue Williams, joint managing director of the group's securities operations, has resigned.

The loss arose from the failure to find buyers for a 29 per cent stake in Premier Consolidated, the oil exploration and production group, which Kleinwort bought from Burmah Castrol in August.

The transaction which failed was a so-

called bought deal, or block trade, in which a securities house buys a large share stake in the hope of breaking it up and selling it on to a number of institutional shareholders.

Kleinwort's block trade was conceived in the early aftermath of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which sent oil prices and oil shares soaring. But the terms were judged too aggressive by the market and Kleinwort was unable to sell its newly acquired stake.

Burmah agreed to sell its holding of 139.9 million shares in Premier on August 6 at a price of 95p. The deal netted Burmah £138 million, but from Kleinwort's position, the price was high. Bought deals are traditionally done at a

discount of 10 per cent or more. But Kleinwort paid a slight premium to the prevailing market price.

Worse still, Mr Hue Williams and his team attempted to place the shares at 103p, a further premium to the market price.

After meeting strong resistance from potential buyers, the placing was aborted. "They were being too greedy," was the verdict of one trader at the time.

David Peake, Kleinwort's chairman, said yesterday: "There is no doubt that this was a misjudgment of the market." Although Mr Hue Williams, a former partner of Wedd Durlacher, the jobbing firm, and Kleinwort's most senior market-maker, was most closely identi-

fied with the deal, Mr Peake said that the transaction "went through all the usual procedures".

The risk of £138 million required the highest approval within Kleinwort. It represented no less than 27 per cent of shareholder funds.

Since August, interest costs of the Premier holding have been mounting up at the rate of about £400,000 per week. Total carrying costs came to about £4.5 million when the shares were sold yesterday.

Mr Peake would not be drawn on the role of other market-making firms during the period when Kleinwort was an enforced holder of Premier. But there is a widespread view that rivals made

little effort to mark up Premier shares even during the time when oil prices were rising sharply. Some traders were said to be reeling in the discomfort of a competitor. "It would not be right for us to whinge," said Mr Peake.

After calling in Cazenove, the broker with unrivalled placing power among institutions, Kleinwort bowed out yesterday from its burden by selling its stock at 78p, a discount of 10 per cent on overnight price. The capital loss was more than £29 million.

Despite strong market suggestions that the merchant banking group might trim back or even close down market-making operations after the heavy loss, Mr Peake stressed that Kleinwort's strategy re-

mained unchanged - even towards bought deals. "They are part of the business we are in. We have done them successfully in the past and shall do so again," he said.

One of the few consolations for Kleinwort came from Roland Shaw, the chairman of Premier. "I have the utmost regard for Mr Hue Williams and I am sorry that the deal was unsuccessful. But Kleinwort acted with the highest standards throughout. I am certain that they could have gone out and found a predator to pay a higher price."

● In an unrelated move, Kleinwort is transferring part of its Japanese warrant trading operation to Tokyo with a possible loss of 25 jobs in London.

Highland links with Cointreau

HIGHLAND Distilleries, the Famous Grouse whisky producer, and Rémy Cointreau, the French cognac and champagne group, have agreed a £75.9 million share deal, under which Highland acquires convertible bonds, which will translate into a 20 per cent stake in Rémy Cointreau.

Highland has agreed to sell its 12.7 per cent holding in Macallan-Glenlivet to Rémy Cointreau as part of the deal.

Brian Ivory, the managing director of Highland, said the deal would lead to a greater European sales effort by the company and would also allow it to participate in the distribution earnings.

Drinks deal, page 29

TIP Europe up

TIP Europe reports pre-tax profits swollen by acquisitions and a change in accounting policies from £12.7 million to £15.5 million for the year to end-July. A 3.6p final dividend makes a total up by 0.3p to 5.3p.

Jim Cleary, the chairman, rejected suggestions that his group was in financial difficulties which have prompted an abrupt slide in the share price.

Temps, page 29

Record for Pict

Pict Petroleum reports record net profit of £2.3 million for the year to the end of June, compared with losses of £399,000. Earnings of 6.22p a share compare with a deficit of 1.45p. There is again no dividend.

Temps, page 29

THE POUND

US dollar 1.9650 (+0.0080)
German mark 2.9691 (+0.0032)
Exchange index 95.0 (same)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1600.8 (-12.5)
FT-SE 100 2068.0 (-15.6)
New York Dow Jones 2405.69 (+24.50)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 2369.36 (+253.28)
Closing Prices ... Page 33
Major indices and major changes Page 31

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base: 14%
3-month interbank 13½-13¾%
3-month eligible bills 13½-13¾%
US: Prime Rate 10%
Federal Funds 7½-8%
3-month Treasury Bills 7.16-7.14%
30-year bonds 96½-98½%

CURRENCIES

London: New York:
£ \$1.9650
£ DM2.9691
£ FF2.9691
£ ¥236.936
£ SDR 1.9650
£ ECU 1.440861
New York:
\$ DM1.5110
\$ SFR1.2735
\$ FF1.6665
\$ ¥125.20
\$ SDR 1.9650
\$ ECU 1.440861

GOLD

London Fixing:
AM \$365.75 pm \$366.00
close \$366.50-367.00 (£186.00-186.50)
New York:
Comex \$366.70-367.20

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Nov) ... \$37.80/bbl (\$38.25)
Denotes latest trading price

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Buyers	Sellers
Australia \$	2.56	2.40	
Austria Sch	21.85	20.25	
Belgium Fr	2.38	2.24	
Canada C\$	11.84	11.14	
Denmark Kr	10.35	9.75	
Finland Mk	3.05	2.95	
France F	6.55	6.45	
Germany DM	3.05	2.95	
Greece Dr	15.92	14.92	
Hong Kong \$	1.16	1.09	
Ireland P	26.50	24.50	
Italy Lira	3.48	3.28	
Japan Yen	273.25	255.25	
Netherlands Gld	5.20	4.70	
Norway Kr	193.00	181.00	
Portugal Esc	11.47	10.83	
Spain Ptas	2.61	2.45	
Sweden Kr	5.02	4.75	
Switzerland Fr	2.61	2.45	
Turkey Lira	2.61	2.45	
USA \$	2.50	2.35	
Yugoslavia Dnr	25.50	15.50	

Rates for small denominations bank only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques.
Retail Price Index: 128.3 (September)

James set to take helm at Dan Air

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

ONE of the City's toughest and most successful troubleshooters has been asked to take over the running of Dan Air as part of a two-year plan aimed at saving the airline.

Talks on the planned takeover were going on late last night and if successful, David James, who has rescued a string of leading industrial companies, will take over next week. The negotiations follow a series of meetings with Dan Air's bankers, who insisted on top-level changes in return for guaranteeing to back the company for the next two years.

If Mr James, who this year was brought in as chairman of Eagle Trust to rescue the company after its shares were suspended when the fraud squad was called in, accepts the proposal, he is expected to demand a drastic change in the structure of the airline. He is likely to place greater emphasis on scheduled services and a smaller fleet.

Mr James' precise role was still being defined last night in talks with Davies and Newman. He would become at least chairman of Dan Air Services and may be appointed to the Davies and Newman holding board in place of Fred Newman, the group chairman, who has been in overall charge since 1966.

The sale of Dan Air's engineering base at Gatwick, for which an agreement in principle has been reached with a non-airline group, but which

has yet to be signed formally, will be a priority.

However, this deal has been thrown into doubt by the decision of Harry Goodman's Air Europe to withdraw from a contract for the company to maintain its fleet of Boeing 757 jets. The contract, representing between 15 and 20 per cent of Dan Air's engineering work and produced profits of about £4 million a year, was subject to cancellation if Dan Air sold the base or even threatened to do so.

Mr Goodman, the chairman of International Leisure Group, which owns Air Europe, said: "We asked if they could give us a guarantee that any of our aircraft which were trapped in the hangar in the event of a closure would be returned to us, and we did not get such a guarantee. We therefore decided to pull out."

"We have learned over the last 18 months that people can disappear around us and have lost a very great deal as a result of the demise of Paramount and Exchange Travel. We are now not prepared to give business to anyone unless we are sure of their future."

Air Europe's stance follows a similar decision by ILG's tour operating group not to use Dan Air aircraft this winter or next summer, leading to allegations that Mr Goodman was trying to hasten the demise of Dan Air so he could pick up its remaining routes. The allegations were denied by Mr Goodman, but he added: "If it was to be a question of them or me, I was deter-

mined it would not be me."

While ILG was taking action against Dan Air, the Dan Air board was putting forward a business plan to Lloyds Bank in the hope of obtaining cash guarantees to provide a breathing space while the company was reorganised.

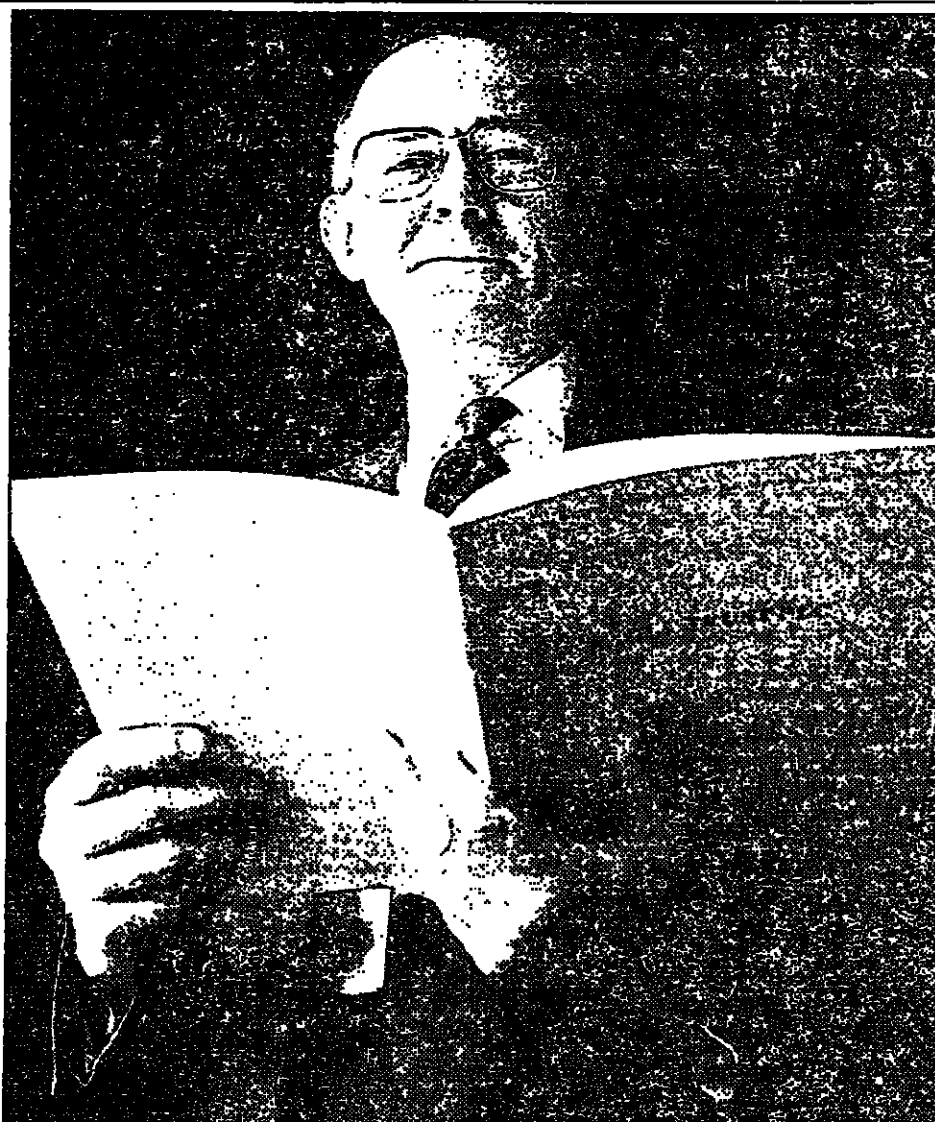
The bank backed the plan yesterday, but with conditions. It insisted that a senior management structure be created to coincide with the switch in the airline's headquarters to Gatwick next month. Sir Ian Poddar, Dan Air's chairman, would be ousted with many executives if Mr James moved in his own team.

Dan Air's troubles stem from the collapse of the holiday charter market. The airline had no direct links with a tour operator to guarantee passengers. Then tensions in the Gulf more than doubled fuel prices.

The banks have been worried about the dwindling returns from Dan Air's charter operations and the Civil Aviation Authority has studied the airline's finances.

If Mr James takes over, he will have to shed many of the older jets in Dan Air's fleet, whose fuel consumption is now much greater than rival airlines with more modern aircraft. At today's fuel prices, it costs £138 per seat to fly an older Boeing 727-200 to Tenerife and back compared with \$81 per seat in a 737-400 and \$83 in a 757.

Comment, page 29



In line for another hot seat: David James, City troubleshooter, looks at Dan Air

Waterford strike adds to losses

WATERFORD Crystal's 14-week strike during the summer sent the Waterford Wedgwood crystal and fine china group deeper into loss in the first half of 1990.

The strike was primarily responsible for a loss of £14.6 million (£13.2 million) at Waterford, and inflated group losses by an estimated £10 million to £18.3 million, against a loss of £10.6 million a year ago, and will also have an impact on the second-

half figures. There will be no interim dividend.

The deal with the Irish workforce is expected to result in substantial production cost savings. Paddy Byrne, group chief executive officer, said: "The results do not show the complete picture. There has been real improvement in the condition of the businesses that, given time, will accrue to shareholders."

The refinancing last spring, which saw Tony O'Reilly's

Fitzwilliam consortium take a 29.9 per cent stake, injected £196.2 million of new cash, cutting net debt from £145.3 million to £134.9 million, and reducing gearing from 200 per cent to almost 20 per cent.

The British-based Wedgwood interests did well to achieve profits of £127 million, against £128 million. Most of the downturn was attributable to currency translation.

Temps, page 29

Carpetland buyout runs into snags

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

THE management buyout of the 119 Carpetland shops from Lowndes Queensway, the group that went into receivership in August, has run into difficulties over the funding of the deal.

The buyout team, which is headed by Ray Nethercott, managing director of the carpet division, approached Kingfisher, the retail group, and had been optimistic that it would receive Kingfisher's backing.

But sources inside Carpetland said that Kingfisher decided not to go ahead with the deal, which was expected to proceed in the next few weeks. Kingfisher refused to comment.

The management buyout team, which has spoken to a number of potential backers, including the 3i and Continental European groups, is said to be looking for less than £10 million and is now considering widening the buyout to include taking some of the remaining 54 Queensway furniture stores as well as the Carpetland business. The management team is believed to be the only group considering taking the complete business.

● Manpower, the former Blue Arrow employment group now attempting to relocate across the Atlantic to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has warned shareholders that it may have to accept less than the £106 million sum already agreed if the company is to sell most of its non-Manpower businesses in this country (Martin Waller writes).

The announcement sent the shares 3p lower to 49p. The deal, a buyout of the Brook Street agency and four other businesses, was announced last month. Last week, the market learned of problems with financing.

Buyouts failing, page 28

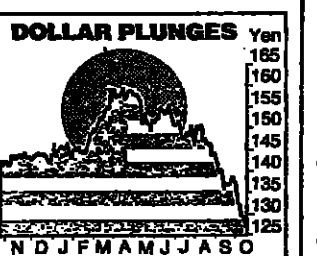
Yen and mark set record over dollar

By ANATOLE KALETSKY

ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE dollar hit a record low against the Deutschmark and fell even more precipitously against the yen after senior policymakers in Washington and Tokyo expressed indifference about the American currency's decline. By the close in London, the dollar was down more than two yen and about 1/8 pfennig. It recovered slightly in early New York trading, responding to stronger than expected figures on industrial output, but it remained well down on the day, especially against the yen.

The American currency hit its lowest point of DM1.5040 and ¥124.80 before lunch in London as traders reacted to steep overnight falls in Tokyo and comments by Nicholas Brady, the US Treasury Secretary, who said in Wash-



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CBI unveils tax relief plan to boost share ownership

By ROSS TIEMAN
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

A CONFEDERATION of British Industry task force is calling for tax relief of £1.200 a year on personal share investments as part of a long-term strategy to encourage the British to buy more shares.

Companies should be allowed to advertise their own shares and should expand employee share ownership, it says.

The confederation adds that the International Stock Exchange should join the companies in a share marketing campaign while mounting a determined effort to cut dealing costs for small investors.

The proposals are among a broad range of measures urged in a report, "A Nation of Shareholders" from the CBI's wider share ownership task force yesterday.

They are needed, it says, to reverse a sharp decline in the proportion of shares owned by individuals. Sir Peter Thompson, chairman of the task force, said the strategy is vital to the health of Britain's economy and society.

He was supported by John Banham, director general of the CBI, who said: "The vast bulk of our fellow citizens do not understand the wealth creation process."

Control over British quoted companies had become con-

ALISTAIR GRANT



Expansive move: Sir Peter Thompson (left) and John Banham of the CBI yesterday

centrated in the hands of about 60 fund managers, he added.

The CBI report says that the proportion of British listed equities held by individuals, by market value, has fallen from 38 per cent in 1975 to 28 per cent in 1981 and 20 per cent today. Only 300,000 owned a balanced portfolio of ten or more shares.

Despite privatisations, "millions of people have

never traded in the secondary market", said Sir Peter. "They just sat there holding privatisation shares and neither, our survey showed, did they know how to trade them."

The task force report blames stock market structures, a failure to market shares, and tax incentives favouring investment in houses and pensions.

The report will be discussed at the CBI's annual conference

at Glasgow in November. If adopted, it will become the policy of the employers' organisation.

The report says the proposed income tax relief on direct share investments of up to £100 a month for a limited period would cost the Treasury £300 million a year if one million people took advantage of it. It is modelled on highly successful schemes in France and America.

Groveswood offers £5m for Priest Marians

By MATTHEW BOND

GROVESWOOD Securities, the property group run by David Holland, the former chairman of Randworth Trust, has finally made its long-awaited bid for Priest Marians Holdings, the London property company.

Groveswood is offering one of its shares for each ordinary share in Priest Marians. Additional Groveswood shares are being placed with institutions at 35p each to raise £13.75 million of working capital. At 35p the loss-making Priest Marians is valued at £5 million.

The deal represents a huge loss for JMB Realty, the American property company. Last November JMB paid 380p a share for the 25.1 per cent stake owned by Simon Fussell, Priest Marians' former chairman. It later took its stake up to 28.3 per cent at a total cost of over £14 million.

Yesterday the Groveswood bid valued the JMB stake at just £1.3 million. The bid was accompanied by interim figures for Priest Marians, which revealed that in the six months to March the company made pre-tax losses of £20.8 million. The company also has current net borrowings of £130 million.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Retraction by BZW on Maxwell Corp

BARCLAYS de Zoete Wedd has been forced to retract statements made in its morning briefing note about the profitability of Maxwell Communication Corporation after a complaint from the group.

BZW had claimed earlier this month that disposals announced recently would weaken the group's prospects. An apology published yesterday said the disposals programme will now increase attributable profits for Maxwell in the financial year to the end of March. The dispute is similar to one between Maxwell and James Capel this summer, at which the publisher forced a retraction of remarks made internally by the broker and reported in the press.

Brabant draws private funds

PRIVATE investors have shown interest in one of the few companies to join the Unlisted Securities Market this year. They subscribed for 550,800 shares in Brabant Resources, 5.1 per cent of the 10.8 million new shares being issued. The oil and gas exploration concern is raising £16 million via a placing and offer, at a cost of almost £254,000. The shares are being issued at 155p.

Air London in 5% rise

AIR London International, the air charter broker that came to the unlisted securities market via a placing last November, has reported a 5 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £822,000 for the year ended in July. The company saw turnover improve 28 per cent to £13.4 million, although earnings slipped by 7 per cent to 6.2p. A final dividend of 1.4p makes 2.5p for the year.

Go-ahead for Ranger

RANGER Oil (UK) has received Department of Energy approval for the development of the Anglia offshore gasfield in the North Sea's southern gas basin. The Anglia field is expected to produce 50 million cubic feet of gas a day from December next year. Gas will be sold under short-term contracts to Kinetica Ltd, BP Gas Marketing and Associated Gas Supplies.

Long-term supplies are intended for Anglia Power and Gas, a Ranger-operated project to develop a 350-megawatt gas-fired electrical generating plant. Ranger, a subsidiary of the eponymous Canadian-based group, has a 35.63 per cent interest in the field.

Profits fall at Bourne End

A SURGE in interest costs took its toll on profits at Bourne End Properties, the property investor. Pre-tax profits fell from £347,000 to £65,000 in the half year to end-June. Group interest payments were £1.25 million, compared with a gain of £214,000 last time. Earnings per share fell from 3.5p to 0.77p but the interim dividend was maintained at 1p.

Cooper falls to £4.6m

FREDERICK Cooper, Britain's second largest supplier of window locks and door knockers, reported a drop in pre-tax profits from £8.7 million to £4.6 million for the year ended last July, in line with the forecast that accompanied last summer's open offer. The dividend, as expected, rises to 4p against 3.85p, with the recommendation of a 2.5p final.

Henry Boot advances

DAVID Boot, chairman of Henry Boot and Sons, the construction company, says there is no indication that public sector contracts will alleviate an increasingly competitive market for privately funded construction projects.

Despite this, Henry Boot has still managed to raise pre-tax profits by 26 per cent to £2 million in the six months to end-June. Mr Boot said the performance was a result of the company's lack of gearing and successfully completed property developments. The interim dividend was raised by 17 per cent to 7p (6p).

This year proving disastrous for many buyout deals

By JONATHAN PRYNN

MORE management buyouts and buy-ins went into receivership in the first half of this year than in the whole of 1989 and four times as many as two years ago, according to a review of the market.

Figures published by the influential Centre for Management Buyout Research show that 32 deals failed between January and June this year. The figure for same period last year was 11 and for the 12 month period it was 27. Only eight deals went into receivership two years ago. In 1986, not a single buyout or buy-in was identified by the centre as a failure.

Buyouts have been hit by their high debt levels, typically three times the size of the equity element in the deals, and by their inability to refinance through flotations, because of the weak stock market, or by trade sales, because of the decline in acquisition activity. The diffi-

culties facing buyouts have been reflected in changing financial structures. In deals carried out in the first six months of the year, the proportion of the funding provided in the form of equity or quasi-equity rose from 18.5 per cent to 24.8 per cent.

The current harsh economic climate is not all bad news for the buyout industry. Nearly ten per cent of deals in the first half this year originated from larger groups that had gone into receivership, the highest proportion since 1984.

Overall, the market saw continuing high volumes of deals, but of much smaller average sizes. In the first half, 271 deals were carried out, compared with the record 503 in the whole of last year. However, the average deal size fell from £14.8 million to £6.3 million. Brian Chiplin of the buyout centre said: "The market is still thriving at the smaller end."

LOFs' tanker fleet grows in \$70m deal

By PHILIP FANGALOS

LONDON & Overseas Freighters, the UK tanker company that is controlled by the Kulukundis family, is expanding its fleet with the addition of a third tanker in a deal worth \$70 million.

LOFs has commissioned a 150,000-ton tanker, in a joint venture with Iroquois Ship-

ping Corporation, the group's holding company, to be built in Japan by Mitsui Engineering and Shipbuilding Company.

The company said the tanker will initially be time-chartered for a five-year period by Chevron Transport Corporation.

Market speculation suggests that a rate of about \$30,000 per day has been agreed, which is understood to be a very healthy deal.

The effective purchase cost of \$70 million will be paid in five instalments. The delivery date is expected to be during 1993.

● Norex, the shipping and insurance group formerly known as Common Brothers, increased taxable profits from £2.4 million to £3.2 million during the year to end-June, despite a reduction in turnover from £48.56 million to £33.37 million.

Earnings rose from 14.07p a share to 18.12p. The company is returning to the dividend list, paying a total of 1p a share (nil paid in 1989).

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With benefit of that priceless commodity, perfect hindsight, Kleinwort Benson was doomed to fail with its attempted block trade in Premier Consolidated. The City's two key principles in such matters were brushed aside in a breathtaking manner.

The first, that big blocks of shares trade at discount, was ignored by the decision to pay Burnham a little more than the prevailing market price for its 29 per cent holding in Premier. This oversight lapses into insignificance by the failure to observe perhaps the most fundamental City rule of them all — always leave a profit for the other party. By seeking a price of 103p per share when Premier shares were trading at around 97p, Kleinwort was being too aggressive by half.

By all accounts, these twin departures from City convention left Kleinwort's luckless salesmen precious little by way of a convincing sales pitch when they began the phone-in to sell the Premier stake.

The whole exercise harks back to the gung-ho era of the immediate post-Big Bang days

Kleinwort falls foul of neglected twins

and contrasts starkly with Kleinwort's normal conservative approach to life.

The financial damage — profits will be no more than half the previously expected £60 million this year — will be painful but brief. Far more permanent will be the setback to Kleinwort's painstaking efforts to establish itself as a first rank player in securities.

As for bought deals, it must be of some concern to banking regulators that more than a quarter of the group's capital could be tied up, for the best part of three months, in a failed effort to make quick profits.

Right to vote

Caird's rejection of the "inadequate" offer for the convertible shares by Severn Trent, despite accepting the terms of the ordinary offer, may bring to a head a simmering and

damaging row in the convertibles market. Only last week, Rank Organisation found itself struggling to pass the 90 per cent threshold in its offer for the Mecca convertible preference shares. A determined rearguard action by Sun Life, which bitterly opposed the terms of the offer, almost prevented Rank from being able compulsorily to buy out the minority holders. It was a lone and ultimately futile gesture but one that reflects the acute concern with which a number of institutions regard the outlook for the convertibles market.

They argue that, in a long succession of deals over the past 18 months, from the Magnet buyout, via the British & Commonwealth receivership, to the Mecca and Caird takeover bids, convertible stockholders have lost out in favour of the

ordinary shareholders or secured lenders.

As a result, companies will find it increasingly difficult to fund themselves with anything other than expensive secured bank debt or dilutive new equity. Certain safeguards for the convertible holders can and have been taken. Enhanced conversion terms in the event of a takeover are becoming more common in new issues, but do not necessarily fully protect the capital value of the convertibles. Investor put options could be imported from the Euro markets, but as the experiences of Saatchi & Saatchi convertible investors show, they may offer little or no protection in the very circumstances for which the put option is designed to provide.

One far more radical alternative is granting voting

rights to convertible shareholders. Issuers and equity holders will hate the idea, but if UK companies want to keep the full range of capital structures available to them, the now thoroughly disillusioned convertible market is going to have to be offered some fairly hefty concessions.

Price of peace

It is a sad irony that 2,100 workers at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders are on course to become casualties of better East-West relations. Job losses are hardly the sort of peace dividend that Merseyside needs.

Cammell Laird was designated a warship yard, so parent company VSEL was refused support to return it to merchant ship building. Despite the "for sale" sign now hanging over the gate, the yard's most likely outlook is a gradual run-down

until its last submarine is completed in February 1993. VSEL will be left with extraordinary costs of perhaps £20 million and a 150-acre derelict site. And problems of its own.

At the main yard in Barrow-in-Furness, VSEL's bread and butter work on Britain's four-boat Trident submarine programme is at its peak. A famine of new warship orders is in prospect.

Since Barrow has the broadest range of ship-building skills in the country, any government anxious to preserve indigenous warship design-and-build capacity would probably ensure its survival.

But job cuts there look as likely as further extraordinary charges for VSEL. The development of more international co-operative agreements, promises to be the shape of the future. But VSEL cannot be immune from the impending world-wide round of defence industry rationalisation.

The share price tells the story. At 365p, down 22p yesterday, VSEL shares cost just 4.4 times prospective earnings despite a yield of 8.2 per cent.

THE extensive share deal between Highland Distilleries the whisky producer, and the controlling shareholder of Rémy Cointreau, the French cognac and liqueurs group, shows that European link-ups are being taken seriously, even by smaller companies.

The Europeanisation of the drinks industry has gathered pace recently, countering the argument, once put forward against the single European market, that differing local tastes would continue to cause a fragmented market.

The deals that have been completed include LVMH, another French cognac and champagne group, which linked with Guinness, and Louis Roederer, a French champagne maker, which bought Ramos Pinto, the Portuguese port wine group.

There was also speculation that Grand Metropolitan would negotiate a distribution deal with Rémy Martin, the cognac division of the Rémy Cointreau group, which also controls Piper Heidsieck, the champagne maker.

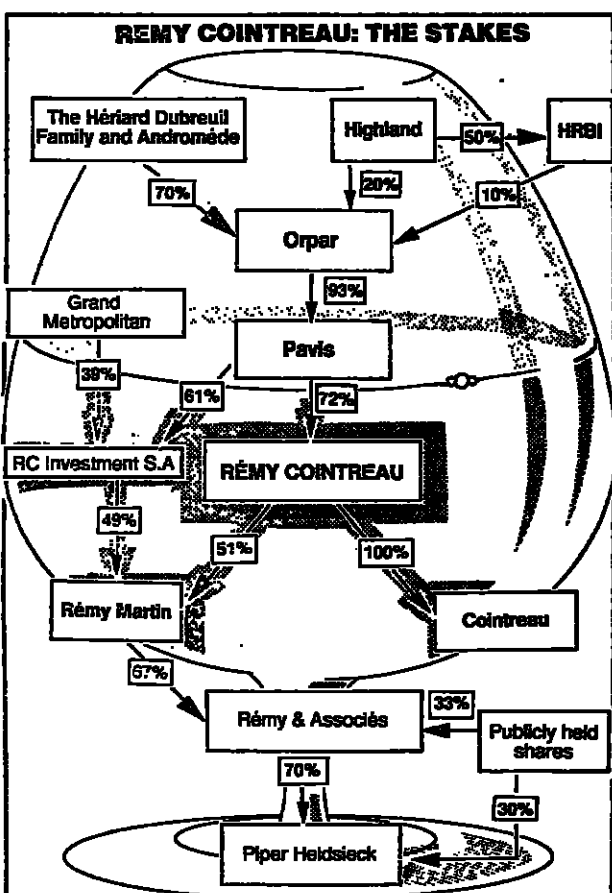
Highland Distilleries, best known for *The Famous Grouse* brand, which is Scotland's best selling whisky, and second best seller in England, aims to improve distribution of its brands of Scotch whiskeys across Europe.

Distribution has been a problem for Highland Distilleries for several decades. Only 17 per cent of the company's annual sales of 24 million bottles, come from abroad, compared with an industry average of 85 per cent. In some countries, such as Germany, the company is hardly represented, while in France, its best overseas market, it sells only 100,000 bottles a year, a sixth of sales enjoyed by Johnnie Walker.

A further advantage of the deal will be Highland Distilleries' ability to cash in on the distribution profits, which over the last decade accounted for a rising proportion of total profits.

The links between the two

Grouse finds new breeding ground in French deal



companies date back to 1988, when Rémy Cointreau's distribution subsidiary was appointed as the principal distributor of *The Famous Grouse*.

Previously fragmented markets appear to be beginning to converge. A survey carried out recently by the French National Inter-profession Office of Wine, which studied the drinking behaviour of 12,400

French men, showed that the number who drink wine each day dropped from 32 per cent to 18 per cent during the past decade. Instead, the French have discovered that the harder liquors are mainly responsible for the country's position at the top of the world's alcohol consumed per person table. France was followed by East Germany, with West Germany third place, and even with unification, the

French position remains unchallenged. In Germany, a traditional beer- and schnaps-dominated drinking culture, consumption of wine, particularly by young people, is increasing.

The still noticeable difference in drinking habits across Europe will be eroded further if the European Commission succeeds in standardising alcohol duties throughout Europe.

The cheap wine duties in Southern Europe account for much higher wine consumption in France, Italy and Spain, while Northern Europeans and the British in particular, have to pay more for wine.

Whisky is one of the drinks for which worldwide demand is rising, particularly from countries such as Japan, and East Europe, which is searching for a replacement to vodka, a drink now definitely out of fashion there.

Under the deal between the two companies, Highland Distilleries' 12.7 per cent stake in Macallan-Glenlivet will fall to the French company, raising its total stake in Macallan-Glenlivet to 26 per cent, and Highland Distilleries will acquire a French-owned malt whisky distillery in Scotland.

The French company will be allowed to build up a stake in Highland Distilleries of up to 10 per cent through open market purchases. The deal shows that the European integration is being carried out in continental, and not traditional British style, namely through complicated cross-shareholdings and distribution arrangements and not through takeovers.

The past experience of Anglo-French ventures, where the British had a minority, has not always been happy, as with the packaging "war" between the former Metal Box and Carnaud, although each of these cases made sound industrial sense.

However, due to the distribution complexity of the European drinks business, more link-ups seem inevitable.

WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
European Business Correspondent

Wedgwood's shattered glass

NO AMOUNT of boardroom tub-thumping can quite drown the sound of shattering glass at Waterford Wedgwood.

At best, it was careless of the new management to allow the Irish workforce to down tools for three months within weeks of finalising its rescue package with Tony O'Reilly's consortium. That strike cost £10 million by the end of the first six months and will also slice into second-half earnings.

It also cost the board a large chunk of what little confidence the rescue plan had begun to restore.

What last April's £96.2 million (£86.8 million) cash injection did achieve was a dramatic improvement in the balance sheet, slashing debt from £145.3 million to £134.9 million in the 12 months and reducing gearing to 20 per cent.

This will affect the profit and loss account more fully in the second six months, although it cut the first-half interest charge by £600,000 to £8.2 million.

Irish brokers believe that, given no fresh lurch in the world economy, the group could break even in the second half, although whether that will be good enough for the board to make a final dividend payment is anyone's guess.

Attempts to launch new brands have been scrapped, at

the cost of £1.7 million, and every management sinew will now, it seems, be bent into exploiting the Waterford name through a wider product range.

The long-term plan is to source these abroad — a pilot operation is already under way in Germany.

The short-term problem is to sell the idea to the Irish trade unions. Having seen the damage that industrial strife can inflict, investors will continue to regard the shares, at 18p, as speculative, despite the value in the brand names.

TIP Europe

CONVENTIONAL wisdom would have it that a company selling on just five times' future earnings and yielding 10 per cent is either in a parlous state financially or at the least in a highly speculative business.

But TIP Europe is in the relatively stable trailer-rental business and, while the full-year figures to end-June were decidedly unexciting, the market confidently expects the company to do at least as well this time.

Operating profits up 58 per cent to £29.3 million could not match a 68 per cent turnover increase, while higher interest rates after hefty capital investment left pre-tax profits just 22 per cent higher at £15.5 million.

But for contributions from acquisitions and a change in depreciation policy, the pre-tax line would actually have been some £800,000 lower.

The share price during the past year has more than anticipated the slowdown. The shares, which came to the market early in 1988 at 125p, have dropped from a high of 210p this February to 74p yesterday, off another 2p on receipt of the results.

The company now says it will be cutting capital spending to little more than a tenth of last year's £70 million, with a consequent reduction in borrowings. Most of the damage last year came from this country, where utilisation rates of about 70 per cent sent profits into a nosedive.

With TIP now claiming that Britain has bottomed out, £16 million pre-tax looks achievable this year. Hardly a raging buy in the current uncertainty, but the shares look to have reached their low.

Pict Petroleum

SHARES in Britain's dwindling band of independent exploration and production companies have risen steadily in recent weeks, reflecting the sharp increase in oil prices. The exception is Pict Petroleum, whose shares still trail the City's most conservative estimates for net asset value.

Ex-steel chief aims to be an airline leader

A FORMER steel magnate, who sold his stockholding company to British Steel for £330 million, has unveiled plans which, if successful, could make him one of the leaders of Britain's airline industry.

Jack Walker, who sold Walkersteel earlier this year, has invested more than £30 million in Jersey European Airways. The company is poised to pick up the pieces of the disintegrating British airline industry, which has been badly hit by spiralling fuel costs and the downturn in the economy.

While other airlines are cutting back in the face of rising fuel prices, Mr Walker has spotted what he is convinced is a gap in the market for an independent airline flying between regional cities, by-passing the main hub airports.

The Walker Aviation Group of Companies set up Spacegrand, an airline, in Blackpool in 1980, with only one five-seater aircraft. In 1985, the group took over Jersey European Airways and merged it with Spacegrand, with the joint operation trading under the Jersey European Airways name.

By concentrating on providing air services from small regional airports and keeping costs to a minimum, Mr Walker has built up Jersey European Airways from a small specialist operator to one of the most successful airlines in Europe.

Now the airline is hoping to cash in on the cutbacks being forced on many of its bigger competitors by introducing direct flights from Manchester, Birmingham, Stansted and Southampton to a wide range of domestic cities.

Jersey European has strengthened its management team, ordered six new propeller-driven aircraft and invested in a new corporate identity.

Five years ago the airline carried 160,000 passengers and had a turnover of less than £9 million. This year the company expects to carry 460,000 passengers and achieve a turnover of more than £26 million.

Jersey European claims to be the last remaining truly



Jack Walker: Hoping to cash in on airline cutbacks

independent British airline and is taking advantage of the government's determination to bolster domestic competition by applying for licences to fly direct from regional airports such as Blackpool, Bristol and Exeter. Already several larger competitors have made ap-

equipment. Such routes will be attractive to Jersey European whose costs are significantly lower.

Many aviation experts believe, however, that the future of regional airlines could be put in jeopardy by the growing number of international buy-outs and marketing links and

'Taking advantage of the government's determination to bolster domestic competition by applying for licences to fly direct from regional airports'

proaches to take over the company. Mr Walker, who says he is determined not to expand too fast, is, however, pledged to resist all overtures.

"We will definitely make it under our own steam and are not interested in any buy-outs," Mr Walker said yesterday. "The downturn in the industry will force many carriers to reconsider their networks and to shed routes that can no longer sustain high cost

HARVEY ELLIOTT
Air Correspondent

European ties urged for food retailers

BRITAIN'S major supermarket groups will have to consider diversifying into overseas markets, according to Alistair Grant, chairman and chief executive of Argill Group, the Safeway supermarket company.

Speaking at the Verdict conference on international retailing, Mr Grant said Sainsbury, Tesco, Argill and Asda all belong to the top 70 UK companies but only Sainsbury could claim to be a significant player in markets other than UK food retailing. Sainsbury owns the DIY chain Homebase and has Shaws supermarkets in America. By contrast nearly every company in the top 50 has a presence in overseas markets.

Mr Grant said that one reason Britain's food retailers had not diversified so far was the potential for continuing strong sales and profit growth in the UK. But the supermarket groups were considering diversification as part of their medium to long term plan. The five main supermarket groups, including Gateway, constitute over 60 per cent of the grocery market in Britain and would not be able to grow by acquiring each other because of monopoly considerations.

Argill has made a tentative move into Europe through an alliance with several European supermarket groups. The European Retail Alliance (ERA) is a partnership of Argill, the Dutch group Ahold and the French group Casino, with each partner holding a £35 million stake in the others.

Mr Grant said that Argill had chosen the partnership route into Europe because the scope for growth by acquisition in Europe was limited. "Contested takeovers are not a strong feature of corporate development in Europe. The chances of acquiring a first class business with real scale are slim," he said.

Other British supermarket groups have been watching Argill's European activities with interest and Mr Grant says the ERA alliance is already beginning to pay dividends.

GILLIAN BOWDITCH

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

French without fears

A CRASH course in French is the next item on Russell Leiman's career agenda, after his promotion from chief executive of the London originator securities business of both Credit Lyonnais and Laing & Crutchfield, its British offshoot, to a group position whereby he will be responsible for all Credit Lyonnais' securities business on a global basis. "That means the international business of New York, Tokyo, South East Asia and Paris, as well as London," says Leiman, aged 42. Even though he readily admits his French is "non-existent", he has now become the first non-Frenchman to be given such a senior position. A requirement is that he must spend two days a week in Paris. "It will be very challenging and it is certainly something the group needs," he adds. "I have got to devise a system of management so that all the various offices feel that what they are doing is for the good of all. Otherwise they will fragment into fiefdoms." Leiman, with Laing & Crutchfield for two years, and with Vickers de Costa for 18 years before that, will be replaced in London by Michael Kerr-Dineen, head of the firm's private client operation.

Wytech way
KELT Energy's dramatic decision to place the jewel in its tarnished crown on the market — a 7.5 per cent stake in

Wytech Farm, the largest on-shore oilfield development in western Europe — is, it seems, typical of the man recruited to relieve the oil and gas independence of its crippling debts. Jack Green-Armstrong, joint chairman and chief executive since January, has a reputation for the unexpected and for taking decisions others fear to take. As a young director of N M Rothschild, he masterminded the dawn raid on Guthrie Corporation for Malaysia's Permodalan Nasional Berhad. Then he whipped Guthrie's industrial interests into shape and brought the company to the stock market in 1986. When the Malaysian government put a spanner in the works by selling its 61 per cent stake in Guthrie to BBA, the motor components group, Green-Armstrong had no alternative but to recommend the bid. Hubert Perrodo, Kel's chairman and 75 per cent shareholder, promptly recruited Green-Armstrong to rescue his troubled company.

No jest

AN INTRIGUING new line that has crept into Minorco's 1990 annual report, making it more interesting than the 1989 report and revealing that the board paid out a total of \$1.02 million last year to directors as part of its incentive scheme. The scheme is based on share price appreciation over a five to seven year period but, sadly, individual members of this elite club are not identified. However, it would be surprising if they did not include Sir Michael Edwards, who led the 1988-89 battle against Consolidated Gold Fields. Edwards' *Who's Who* entry mentions that his club memberships include that of Jesters, a club which apparently prides itself on its sporting links.

Currie's off

CHARLOTTE Square in Edinburgh, traditionally home to generations of Scottish fund managers, is, it seems, slowly losing its grip on the investment community there. Martin Currie, one of its longest-standing residents, has surprised other Charlotte

Square firms by moving to the nearby Edinburgh Financial Centre, which opened recently. Such a move, by a firm known for its conservatism, has apparently set tongues wagging among employees of its former neighbours, among them Ivory & Sime and Stewart Ivory, with some wondering if they too should be thinking about moving. Baillie Gifford, which has offices just off the square, has taken space behind the Caledonian Hotel, and Dundee Fund Managers, moved out in November 1987. But some habits die hard. For Martin Currie, anxious to recreate the same rarefied atmosphere, has been carefully moving its prized antique Georgian furniture into the new offices. It might, however, look a little out of place in the new building, which locals have unfavourably dubbed "the hole in the ground", because of the long time it took to construct.

Richard Jones

RICHARD Jones, leader of the leisure research team at Panmure Gordon, is leaving for a position in Singapore. Jones, aged 25, who has spent three years building up the team, will join Baring Securities next month to focus on Malaysian and Singapore markets. "I have always liked the area," says Jones, who had hoped to be posted to Hong Kong but is more than happy with the eventual choice. "I am making a complete break with the leisure sector, but may do some work on hotels at first."

CAROL LEONARD

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TRADITIONAL OPTIONS

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SEMI-CONDUCTORS			
ASSOCIATED FINE, MARLBOROUGH			
IBM	170	1/2	
Intel	18.00	1/2	
Motorola	2.56	1/4	
Rockwell	2.56	1/4	
Tel. Corp.	1.75	1/4	
Western Union	1.75	1/4	
UTILITIES			
Edison	1.75	1/4	
Electric	1.75	1/4	
Gas	1.75	1/4	
Water	1.75	1/4	
RETAIL			
Walmart	1.75	1/4	
Kmart	1.75	1/4	
Target	1.75	1/4	
Walgreens	1.75	1/4	
CVS	1.75	1/4	
Wal-Mart	1.75	1/4	
TELECOM			
AT&T	1.75	1/4	
Sprint	1.75	1/4	
Verizon	1.75	1/4	
Qwest	1.75	1/4	
Southwest	1.75	1/4	
US West	1.75	1/4	
WorldCom	1.75	1/4	
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3M	1.75	1/4	
Boeing	1.75	1/4	
General Electric	1.75	1/4	
IBM	1.75	1/4	
Intel	1.75	1/4	
Motorola	1.75	1/4	
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Western Union	1.75	1/4	
FINANCIAL			
Bank of America	1.75	1/4	
JP Morgan	1.75	1/4	
Wells Fargo	1.75	1/4	
Citigroup	1.75	1/4	
Goldman Sachs	1.75	1/4	
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2000	22.96	24.45	-0.93
2001	23.00	24.50	-0.90
2002	23.04	24.55	-0.87
2003	23.08	24.60	-0.84
2004	23.12	24.65	-0.81
2005	23.16	24.70	-0.78
2006	23.20	24.75	-0.75
2007	23.24	24.80	-0.72
2008	23.28	24.85	-0.69
2009	23.32	24.90	-0.66
2010	23.36	24.95	-0.63
2011	23.40	25.00	-0.60
2012	23.44	25.05	-0.57
2013	23.48	25.10	-0.54
2014	23.52	25.15	-0.51
2015	23.56	25.20	-0.48
2016	23.60	25.25	-0.45
2017	23.64	25.30	-0.42
2018	23.68	25.35	-0.39
2019	23.72	25.40	-0.36
2020	23.76	25.45	-0.33
2021	23.80	25.50	-0.30
2022	23.84	25.55	-0.27
2023	23.88	25.60	-0.24
2024	23.92	25.65	-0.21
2025	23.96	25.70	-0.18
2026	24.00	25.75	-0.15
2027	24.04	25.80	-0.12
2028	24.08	25.85	-0.09
2029	24.12	25.90	-0.06
2030	24.16	25.95	-0.03
2031	24.20	26.00	0.00
2032	24.24	26.05	0.03
2033	24.28	26.10	0.06
2034	24.32	26.15	0.09
2035	24.36	26.20	0.12
2036	24.40	26.25	0.15
2037	24.44	26.30	0.18
2038	24.48	26.35	0.21
2039	24.52	26.40	0.24
2040	24.56	26.45	0.27
2041	24.60	26.50	0.30
2042	24.64	26.55	0.33
2043	24.68	26.60	0.36
2044	24.72	26.65	0.39
2045	24.76	26.70	0.42
2046	24.80	26.75	0.45
2047	24.84	26.80	0.48
2048	24.88	26.85	0.51
2049	24.92	26.90	0.54
2050	24.96	26.95	0.57
2051	25.00	27.00	0.60
2052	25.04	27.05	0.63
2053	25.08	27.10	0.66
2054	25.12	27.15	0.69
2055	25.16	27.20	0.72
2056	25.20	27.25	0.75
2057	25.24	27.30	0.78
2058	25.28	27.35	0.81
2059	25.32	27.40	0.84
2060	25.36	27.45	0.87
2061	25.40	27.50	0.90
2062	25.44	27.55	0.93
2063	25.48	27.60	0.96
2064	25.52	27.65	0.99
2065	25.56	27.70	1.02
2066	25.60	27.75	1.05
2067	25.64	27.80	1.08
2068	25.68	27.85	1.11
2069	25.72	27.90	1.14
2070	25.76	27.95	1.17
2071	25.80	28.00	1.20
2072	25.84	28.05	1.23
2073	25.88	28.10	1.26
2074	25.92	28.15	1.29
2075	25.96	28.20	1.32
2076	26.00	28.25	1.35
2077	26.04	28.30	1.38
2078	26.08	28.35	1.41
2079	26.12	28.40	1.44
2080	26.16	28.45	1.47
2081	26.20	28.50	1.50
2082	26.24	28.55	1.53
2083	26.28	28.60	1.56
2084	26.32	28.65	1.59
2085	26.36	28.70	1.62
2086	26.40	28.75	1.65
2087	26.44	28.80	1.68
2088	26.48	28.85	1.71
2089	26.52	28.90	1.74
2090	26.56	28.95	1.77
2091	26.60	29.00	1.80
2092	26.64	29.05	1.83

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2-3620-2.5256
 179.572-180.452
 0.936-0.943
 5.9825-7.0825
 297.59-301.10
 15.2857-15.2955
 35.19-35.69
 5.3020-5.3087
 5690-5740
 4.2701-4.2773
 2.3714-2.3771
 7.4228-7.5003
 4.9532-4.9613
 1.1325-1.1348
 31.02-31.07
 7.7718-7.7726
 133.25-133.48
 -39.58-39.75
 -10.62-10.64
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	Vol 9	Vol Pig-TS Cattle-0		R/A - 121.03	-182.66
				T/A - -8.82	+0.77

Year	Vol	Vol Pg-16	Cattle	0
1970	11.83	-0.57		
1971	11.83	-0.57		
1972	11.83	-0.57		
1973	11.83	-0.57		
1974	11.83	-0.57		
1975	11.83	-0.57		
1976	11.83	-0.57		
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1982	11.83	-0.57		
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2052	11.83	-0.57		
2053	11.83	-0.57		

Year	Vol	Vol Pg-16	Cattle	0
1970	11.83	-0.57		
1971	11.83	-0.57		
1972	11.83	-0.57		
1973	11.83	-0.57		
1974	11.83	-0.57		
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2053	11.83	-0.57		

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Oakland A's are mortalised in the baseball park by the underdogs of Cincinnati

When the ossum played possum

SIMON BARNES

Cincinnati OSUM. That was the word for the Oakland A's in the build-up to the World Series. A truly ossum ball club. The question was not whether they would win; they began the series as overwhelming favourites. The question was whether or not they would establish themselves as a dynasty.

A die-nasty is a club that changes personnel and remains effortlessly dominant. Liverpool are a die-nasty. Liverpool are ossum, too.

The A's are making their third successive appearance in the World Series. The series is played on a first-to-seven-wins basis, and A's won 4-0 last year. Ossum. They reached the series this year by beating Boston 4-0. Ossum again: relentless, grinding, mechanical excellence.

They took on the Cincinnati Reds in the first game of the series on Tuesday night. A mismatch, obviously. Someone said that the A's represent a martini with an olive. The Reds are a beer-and-shot. That translates as hunky, but not sophisticated enough.

The scoreline was 7-0, which was the sort of thing people had been predicting. Except that the victory went to Cincinnati.

Ah, you can travel the world, and see a thousand different sports, but sometimes it seems that everywhere you go is the same place. I have covered the same story in South Korea and at Home Park, Plymouth, and everywhere in between, and have seen just the same underdog victory.

Underdogs generally need a good start, something to make the incredible seem believable. The top teams fear a bad start: a momentary faltering of stride can germinate the seed of doubt. And then you are off.

GAME ONE FACTS

Game One (at Cincinnati)

	Runs	Hits	Errors
Oakland	0	0	0
Cincinnati	7	10	1

PITCHING: Oakland: Stewart, Burns (5th inning), Nelson (5), Sanderson (7), Eckersley (8) and Stenback; Cincinnati: Rijo, Dibble (8), Myers (9) and Oliver. Winning pitcher: Rijo (1-0 in series); loser: Stewart (0-1). Home runs: Cincinnati: Davis (1).

home run would have tied the game.

That is the particular beauty of baseball: one second of time could change the course of the night and nullify two hours of sweat and inspiration. One second, and a matter of millimetres. In the contact of round bat and round ball there is little margin for error. You cannot hit a jammy home run; the contact has to be perfect. It has been claimed (mostly by baseball people, admittedly) that a perfect hit is the hardest feat of coordination in sport.

Well, that perfect connexion is exactly what Mark McGwire failed to make. With the Reds deep in trouble, and those four runs waiting to be belted in, he hit slightly beneath the ball and up it went, a routine catch, the sort that baseball players make with quite absurd nonchalance. The Reds had been left off "It was a slider, and honestly, it was not one of my best pitches of the night," Rijo said. "I had bad location, but I got away with it."

It was, then, a night of archetypal sport: an underdog victory. They are happening all over the world, as I say — but not quite in the same way. For example, all the players, managers and coaches wore an American flag patch on their uniforms, answering a request from the United Services Organisation to demonstrate their support for members of the armed forces in the Gulf.

"As much as anything in this great land of ours, baseball is America," Admiral William J. Crowe Jr, USN (ret), said. "This patriotic gesture indicates throughout the world that the American people stand behind their country."

Marge Schott, the famously eccentric owner of the Reds, offered a pre-game prayer for the boys "in the Far East." Her dog, the almost equally famous Schottzie, stood beside her. The simple emotions of sport are understood and enjoyed the world over. Sport can also be used to expose vast gulfs in understanding. A beautiful young serviceman sang *The Star-Spangled Banner* as gloriously as the young German sang his patriotic song in *Cabaret*. Schottzie wagged his tail.



Bat-breaking work: McGwire, of the A's, finds a ball from Rijo too hot to handle

SPORTS LETTERS

Dunhill Cup played according to the rules

From Mr Stephen Acton

Sir, I watched the closing stages of the England v Japan Dunhill Cup semi-final on BBC television, at first with growing irritation as neither Peter Alliss nor Harry Carpenter spelt out the position with precision as Howard Clark and Satoshi Higashi were playing the 18th hole; then with astonishment when I appreciated this was because the commentators were not sufficiently aware of the rules; and finally with incredulity as I gradually realised what those rules were.

But, as the rules were set out in *The Times* (October 15), there can be no doubt whatsoever that, contrary to the view of your golf correspondent, Mitchell Platts, the tournament organisers were correct in their interpretation. Of the three paragraphs, the first two make clear that winning matches are awarded one point each, but there is a notable omission in those paragraphs to deal with halved matches at all.

Were the rule to end there, one could only assume that halved matches should be dis-

counted, with a result that Japan ought to have gone through 1-0. But the third paragraph then deals specifically with what is to happen when a match is level after 18 holes, and that is that that match should be decided by sudden death. Clearly this paragraph must be read together with the other two, thus expressly dealing with the earlier omission.

But, even more clearly, the paragraph specifically provides that a sudden-death play-off shall take place "if players in any one, two or even all three" games return equal scores (my emphasis).

Where two (but not one or three) games are level ex hypothesi the third game must have been won by one side or the other, so that play-offs of the two drawn games are expressly called for notwithstanding that one team must be "one-up". That was precisely the position on Saturday.

It is, incidentally, the only situation in which play-offs are required, which might affect the result of the match, when one

side is ahead after all three matches have been completed. I am, personally, would quarrel with the view that this is an anomaly which ought to be corrected. Yours faithfully, STEPHEN ACTON, 1 Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, London.

From L. Robertson
Sir, Of all the controversies that surround the various types of tie-break, surely the craziest of the lot must be the version according to which the winners of the Dunhill Cup, despite the Japanese playing record of one, two halves and no defeats, they still found themselves knocked out after a sudden-death play-off.

A tie-break is fine in the event of a tie, but to introduce them for various other spurious reasons degrades the proceedings to a farce.

Yours faithfully, L. ROBERTSON, 18 Dorset Street, Woodside, Aberdeen.

Public safety

From Douglas Stewart

Sir, I was interested to read your report (October 15) that the sports minister is to produce a set of draft planning guidelines to be brought into account when applications are being considered for creation of new golf courses.

Whilst the thrust of your article suggests that conservation issues are the main aim of the guidelines, equally I think consideration has to be given to the safety of members of the public whose interests may be jeopardised by the obvious danger from flying golf balls.

I recently attended a meeting with representatives of the Departments of the Environment and Transport who indicated that they were aware of any guidelines about whether or not a particular course would represent a safety hazard, for example, to road users.

There is no lack of legal authority about the duty of care owed to members of the public who may be injured and in those circumstances I hope that if this present set of draft proposals does not cover this aspect, criteria are announced recommending a minimum of distances for holes to be placed away from other members of the public including, in particular, road users. Personal safety is no less vital than environmental protection.

Yours faithfully, DOUGLAS STEWART, 63 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2.

Sports Letters may be sent by fax to 071-782 5046. They should include a daytime telephone number.

Welsh choice

From Mr S. Corbett

Sir, The signing by Hull Rugby League Club of the Neath and Wales No. 8, Mark Jones, has brought the number of Welsh internationals moving from union to league to 14 in the last five years. This does not take into account other Welsh players below full international level who have "gone north".

With such talent now playing the league code, perhaps the time has come to consider the reintroduction of the Welsh international rugby league side.

It was last tried in the early 1980s, when a triangular competition, also involving England and France, was played on a home-away basis; that is two matches for each country. There are only a limited number of opportunities to impress the Great Britain selectors above club level and such an international competition could usefully serve as international trials for rewarding players who may not play rugby for Great Britain. At the same time, such international rugby league could help to cement the image of the game in Wales while highlighting the opportunities available to players in Wales who are considering switching codes.

Yours faithfully, S. CORBETT, 62 Covert Road, Claygate.

From Mr Ralph W. F. Sampson
Sir, Derek Wyatt, in his article headed "Time for the Barbarians" (October 10) does a disservice to the president and his hard-working committee. As one who had the good fortune to play for the Barbarians on several occasions, including the captaincy, I think he has got it all wrong for the following reasons.

1. The game as played by the Barbarians is an open attacking game giving the ball as much air as possible. Inevitably a scratch

side, however talented, will make errors. Whilst the object is to win, it is not so at all costs.

2. With the advent of leagues, tours abroad by the four countries with international caps being awarded, and other club competitions, loyalties and the time factor place a strain on players who might be a Barbarian first choice.

3. It is not within the province of clubs to indulge in political "hot potatoes" such as the "Roman and South African situation". It is the job of the various rugby unions after full consultation and agreement.

4. Going back over the years, the annual fixture list comprised six games: four at Easter in Wales and two against West Midlands. A seventh was added at the request of the Rugby Football Union when the expense of an overseas touring side was unlikely to reach target. The Easter tour to Wales was reduced to two because many of those chosen simply could not spare the time for the tour.

5. The Barbarian RUFC has no money, so it cannot indulge in arranging new fixtures: it has in the first instance to be invited, with the hosts guaranteeing the expense involved.

6. The dismal future suggested will not happen if the Barbarians club remains exclusive, which I am sure it will.

7. To say that once you have stopped playing, you never hear from them is not true. Derek Wyatt was invited and attended the recent centenary dinner.

I think it is a great pity when a player who has received the highest honours the game can bestow puts pen to paper criticising the administrators; in this case, unpaid elected volunteers. There is an odour of carping and whingeing.

Yours sincerely, RALPH W. F. SAMPSON, Dinnet, Hazelmere Road, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire.

Walker offers fresh hope

From Ms Peggy S. Conley

Sir, The Women's Professional Golf European Tour has been given a glimmer of hope through the appointment of Mickey Walker as captain of the Solheim Cup, the equivalent to the Ryder Cup which is to be held the week of November 16-18 at Lake Nona, Florida.

Few people have the talent, class and conviction to put themselves on the line for what they believe. Mickey Walker, who has little to gain by accepting the captaincy of the British and European side that has a slim chance of beating the Americans. The task is voluntary.

So how can your reporter (October 6) justify criticising Ms Walker for not planning to be in Italy at the announcement of the team?

Is the reporter unaware of Ms Walker's responsibility to 750 members of the Warren Golf Club in Essex?

And that an abbreviated and uncelebrated announcement before two members of the press in a chaotic Italian press tent does not make a press conference?

I believe we readers understand the meaning of priority even if your reporter doesn't. There are few in professional sport as well respected as Ms Walker, and in the end, she did go to Italy.

PEGGY S. CONLEY, Flat 4, Norfolk House, 16 Elton Road, Cleveland, Near Bristol, Avon.

Free to run

From Rev Warren Greatrex

Sir, There is an "official" answer to Miss Rogers and her teacher (Letters, October 11).

Ben Johnson cheated, was found out, admitted his share in it, promised not to cheat again, paid the "official" penalty, and has been "officially" forgiven: he is free to compete honestly.

But the paradox remains: if people generally do not forgive him (for example, if they "boo" and harass him when he again competes) he may despair and be forced to give up running.

On the other hand, if everyone forgives him wholeheartedly, other athletes may be led to take this as a sign that "cheating is worth the penalty" and try to cheat also.

There is no perfect solution. I hope that everyone will forgive a person who has promised to amend and has paid the prescribed penalty.

But I know that there will always be a need to monitor athletes, human nature being what it is.

Yours truly, REV WARREN GREATREX, The Highlands, Great Down, Symonds Yat, Herefordshire.

Taking supporters seriously

From Mr P. A. Lee

Sir, Mr Tom Pendry's letter (October 11) claims that the Football Trust appears to hold the view of football supporters in low esteem. Far from it, the trust attaches great importance to their views, indeed, that is why we made clear, when agreeing our initial policy guidelines on grant aid for major projects, that questions of ground-sharing are for football administrators, clubs and supporters — to settle.

The Trust has no intention of attempting to dictate who shall share with whom: we simply make the point that if clubs themselves decide that the best way to respond to the requirements of the Taylor Report is by ground-sharing, the trust may be able to take a more generous view.

We do take the opinions of the supporters seriously. We have provided financial support for the Football Supporters' Association's administration and for its successful work on supporters' behalf in Italy during the World Cup finals. We have representatives of the FSA and the National Federation of Football Supporters' Clubs on the panel of adjudicators for this year's Community Award Scheme for Football League clubs.

On matters of major policy, the Football Association hold joint meetings with supporters' organisations. Since this provides an ideal forum for the football authorities to hear first hand the views of the supporter, I was delighted to be able to accept an invitation from the League to represent the trust at these meetings.

Yours faithfully, P. A. LEE, Secretary, The Football Trust 1990, Second Floor, Walkden House, 10 Melton Street, NW1.

From Mr Martin Herrema
Sir, Tom Pendry MP is to be applauded for his call for the

"ordinary supporter" to be given a meaningful voice in the future of football. Stadium improvements should indeed equip the game for the next century and beyond, and it is vital that both bodies representing the views of supporters are represented on the Football Trust 1990 and the Football Licensing Authority.

However, if Mr Pendry seriously wants to take the views of ordinary supporters into account, he should start by acknowledging that the vast majority, although keen to see improved facilities, don't want all-seater grounds forced on the game.

Thousands of supporters up and down the country know that the end of the traditional terraces will mean higher admission charges, loss of atmosphere and restrictions on the freedom to enjoy a game with a large group of friends.

Despite Lord Justice Taylor's recommendations, there is no evidence that properly designed and maintained terrace areas at football grounds are any less safe than seated areas.

The Hillsborough disaster was caused by the fencing at the front of the terrace and criminally inadequate organisation, not by the terracing itself. Indeed, I would suggest that statistically, I am safer standing on the North Bank at Highbury every other Saturday than commuting into London by train and tube.

By all means, call for the voice of football supporters to be heard, Mr Pendry, but don't use a deaf ear to the real message coming from the majority of ordinary supporters. Your party might even find there are more than a few votes to be won in opposing this rush to all-seater stadiums.

Yours sincerely, MARTIN HERREMA, 16 Plumbeur, Lee Chapel North, Basildon, Essex.

Rye solution

From P. J. A. Smith

Sir, During the televising of the Dunhill Cup at St Andrews, a commentator raised a point of general interest: golf clubs should a bunker rake be left in the hazard or outside it? In either case, the rake, if left on the ground, is quite likely to stop or deflect the ball, and I would recommend the system which we adopted many years ago at Rye. A short length of pipe is buried vertically at the side of the bunker, the top being flush with the surface. The handle of the rake is then inserted in the pipe, so that it stands upright, and the risk of the ball striking it is reduced to the minimum.

Yours faithfully, P. J. A. SMITH, 5 Victoria Street, New Romney, Kent.

Whatever next

From N. J. F. B. Samengo-Turner

Sir, The United States' obsession with feminism and equal sex

rights seems to have attained new levels of manifest silliness in the recently well-publicised case of the journalist, Lisa Olsen, ostensibly suffering sexual harassment whilst conducting a post-match interview with naked male football players in the locker room of the New England Patriots.

What on earth next, one asks oneself? Imagine the stereotype image of the all-American sports journalist, cigarette hooked lazily in the corner of an open mouth, battered and perched on the back of his head, sitting in dirty floor-length trench coat, recently-licked pencil hovering over a dog-eared reporters' pad — eyes bulging at the imminent receipt of a post-match report straight from the hot atmosphere of the showers of the University of California, Los Angeles, ladies' netball team!

Yours faithfully, N. J. F. B. SAMENGO-TURNER, Coltsfoot Cottage, Wickhambrook, Newmarket, Suffolk.

SNOOKER

Hallett concerned about failure against Foulds

By STEVE ACTONSON

MIKE Hallett saved Ian Doyle, his manager, a job by giving himself a thorough dressing down after a poor performance against Neal Foulds in the fifth round of the Rothmans Grand Prix, in which he was beaten 5-2 in Reading yesterday.

Hallett, the world No. 7, appears to be a first-half player. He was level at 2-2 by the interval but faded away thereafter, lacking, he said, "not stamina but concentration".

Both Hallett and Foulds, once third in the world but now thirteenth, but rising fast and unbeaten in nine ranking tournament matches this season, criticised the quality of the match but it had its moments. Foulds snatched the first frame on the black, Hallett swept home breaks of 96 and 41 to lead 2-1, but he missed the simplest of reds into a middle pocket in the fourth and Hallett cleared to pink with 65.

After that it was no contest. Foulds missed a few but Hallett simply could not take advantage.

He moaned: "I just don't know what was the matter with me after the interval. There was a lot of money at stake but I didn't seem to feel anything."

"It was a thoroughly unprofessional performance from me but Neal didn't play that well either and I would not expect to get that many chances in an amateur tournament."

really have to get my concentration going."

Foulds has now reached the quarter-finals of the last four ranking events, albeit that three were last season, but has not reached a semi-final since 1987.

"I started this season provisionally ranked seventh in the world and I'd be delighted just to hold on to that position let alone improve it," he said.

"I got a nice few ranking points behind me and no pressure on me at all. Two years ago I would have lost a match like that but I got the winning habit back again and I'm only one win off equalling my best ever run."

Peter Francisco, of South Africa, ended the run of world No. 95, Ken Owens, with a 5-1 victory but the scoreflattered him.

He ended the match with a break of 104 but stole three of the first five frames on the black, the first of them from 61-0 clear.

RESULTS: Fifth round: N Foulds (Eng) 5-2 P Francisco (SA) at Kew Gardens; J White (Eng) 5-3 S Newbury (Wales); S-C K Stevens (Can) 4-0 G Griffiths (Wales).

TODAY'S ORDER OF PLAY (with round, best of nine frames): 3pm: J Graham (Eng) v G Hargreaves (Wales); 5pm: P Francisco (SA) v K Stevens (Can); 7pm: G Wilkinson (Eng) v J White (Eng); 9pm: J Perrot (Eng) v D O'Kane (Ire).

● A press conference to unveil details of a record sponsorship package for the 1990 women's world championships will be held in London on Monday.

ROWING

Banks has flair for coaching business

By MIKE ROSEWELL

MARK Banks, of Nottingham, has been appointed chief coach of the junior national team. The Amateur Rowing Association had been interviewing candidates, domestic and foreign, for about four months. Banks did not apply until the post was advertised after the junior world championships in France, where he proved, for the third year running, his remarkable motivating power.

Banks first appeared on the international scene in 1988 as coach to the Great Britain junior coxless four, which included two members of the Nottingham and Union club, of which he was, and still is, captain. Against predictions, the light crew came through late in the world final to gain a bronze medal and Banks' blitz entered rowing folklore.

It was less necessary last year when his coxless four won gold by a remarkable 3sec. This year, again against predictions, his Great Britain eight, with five 17-year-olds on board, "blitzed" a silver from the fancied United States. Two days later, he was coaching novices back in Nottingham.

Aged 32, Banks is unmarried

and began rowing at 14 at Hellingworth Lake, competing extensively as a junior. He is joint managing director of a firm of financial consultants in Derby, but intends to "take a step backwards from business" and considers that he can "dovalent the two jobs" and that "experience in business helps with coaching". A habitual intercom, and watching him admitted that he was nervous at his own interview and "over the moon" that he got the post.

Therein lies the reason that Banks will be welcomed by junior rowing coaches throughout the country. He is successful and modest, with a sense of humour, and, watching him, he admitted that he was nervous at his own interview and "over the moon" that he got the post.

He agreed that Bruce Grainger, his predecessor, had set up a "good system", but he can see ways of "improving it", although "there will be no bats in the air". Looking at the recent medal tally of the Great Britain junior squad, he presumably has his priorities right.

MOTOR RALLYING

Sainz slip a boost for Auriol

By a CORRESPONDENT

DIDIER Auriol, of France, took the lead in the San Remo rally in northern Italy for the first time yesterday, but with only a minute separating the leading three the struggle between Lancia and Toyota is far from over.

Auriol put Lancia back in front when Carlos Sainz, the overnight leader, rolled his Toyota Celica. Fortunately the Spaniard, who needs only one point to become world champion driver for the first time, did not seriously damage the car and lost only two places.

The Sainz incident, however, caused the retirement of this year's champion, Massimo Biasion, of Italy. Biasion slid off the road in his Lancia while avoiding Sainz's over-turned car, and hit a tree.

Malcolm Wilson, of Britain, in seventh place after setting the fastest time on the opening two gravel stages, also retired. He hit a bank on the next test, jamming a wheel against the bodywork of his works Ford Sierra.

Gwyneth Evans, of Wales, has moved up to third place in the showroom class in his Ford Sierra, and Louise Atkinson-Walker, twentieth overall in her Vauxhall Astra, is poised to win the Ladies Cup.

LEADING POSITIONS after 50 stages: 1. D Auriol (Fr), Lancia; 2. Carlos Sainz (Sp), Toyota; 3. C Wilson (Br), Lancia; 4. C Wilson (Br), Lancia; 5. A Forsberg (S), Lancia; 6. A Forsberg (S), Lancia; 7. A Forsberg (S), Lancia; 8. A Forsberg (S), Lancia; 9. A Forsberg (S), Lancia; 10. A Forsberg (S), Lancia.

MOTOR RACING

Warwick returns to Jaguar

By JOHN BLUNDSDEN

DEREK Warwick is returning to the Silk Cut Jaguar team and will lead its assault on the 1991 world sports car championship. Warwick, aged 36, from Jersey, who has been leading the Camel Lotus Formula One team this season, will be taking over the seat vacated by Martin Brundle, who will be back in Formula One next year as No. 1 driver of the Brabham team.

Warwick had a fine season with the Silk Cut Jaguar team in 1990 when he finished only one point behind the joint world sports car champions, Derek Bell and Hans Stuck. He hopes to emulate Brundle, who secured the title with Jaguar in 1988 before making a temporary return to Formula One with Brabham last year.

"Warwick, who has signed a one-year contract yesterday, 'I am delighted to be joining the Jaguar team again. I believe that the car Ross Brawn is designing for the 1991 championship is more than capable of winning races."

"It was a hard decision to leave Formula One," he said. "But I'd rather be up front and winning races than being in the back of the grid in another."

● FLORENCE: Alessandro Nannini, who is recovering in hospital here, still hopes to race again, his wife said (Reuters reports). Nannini's lower right arm was severed and his left arm broken.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

FOOTBALL
OVERSEAS PAPERS CORRELATION:
West Ham v Tottenham (7.30).

OTHER SPORT
BADMINTON: Carlsberg Classic (Preston).
SNOOKER: Rothmans grand prix (Hendon Theatre, Reading).

SPORT ON TV

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Super Bowl XXIV (12.30-1.30) CBS. Soccer: England v Poland, Scotland v Switzerland (12.30-1.30) Euro. Soccer: England v Poland, Scotland v Switzerland (12.30-1.30) Euro.

BASEBALL: St Louis (12.30-1.30) CBS. Soccer: England v Poland, Scotland v Switzerland (12.30-1.30) Euro. Soccer: England v Poland, Scotland v Switzerland (12.30-1.30) Euro.

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